THE ATTAINMENT OF MOKSHA ACCORDING TO SHANKARA AND VIVEKANANDA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCRIPTURE (SRUTI) AND EXPERIENCE (ANUBHAVA)

by

Anant Anand Rambachan

Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

Department of Theology and Religious Studies

March 1984

Supervisor: Dr. Ursula King

ABSTRACT

Advaita Vedānta, as systematized and expressed by Shankara (788-820), is widely represented in contemporary studies as positing a special experience (anubhava) to be the ultimately valid source of the knowledge of brahman (brahmajñāna). According to these studies, Shankara only accorded a provisional validity to the knowledge gained by inquiry into the words of the śruti (Vedas), and did not see the latter as the unique source (pramāṇa) of brahmajñāna. The affirmations of the śruti, it is argued, need to be verified and confirmed by the knowledge gained through direct experience (anubhava), and the authority of the śruti therefore, is only secondary.

My own study of the original commentaries of Shankara suggests, however, that these common contemporary interpretations grossly misrepresent his epistemology in failing to apprehend the meaning and significance which he ascribes to the śruti as the definitive source of the knowledge of brahman. It is clear that in relation to the gain of brahmajñāna, Shankara saw all other sources of knowledge as being subordinate to the śruti, and supported his view by detailed and well-reasoned arguments. It is also clear that the approach to Shankara adopted by modern commentators is profoundly influenced by Swami Vivekananda's (1863-1902) formulation and presentation of Advaita Vedānta. Vivekananda was the first Hindu to elaborately present Advaita to the West, and his interpretation has dominated the understanding of Shankara's epistemology. Unfortunately, his views have received little critical attention, and are not distinguished from those of Shankara.

This study therefore, is concerned primarily with investigating Shankara's understanding of the śruti as the source of brahmajñāna and the process through which this knowledge is attained. It also seeks, by analyzing the lectures and writings of Swami Vivekananda, to highlight and evaluate his radical contrasts with Shankara about the authoritative source of the knowledge of brahman.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

NOTE ON CAPITALIZATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

PART ONE

CHAPTER

1. A REVIEW OF CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE ROLE OF ŚRUTI AND ANUBHAVA IN SHANKARA 23

2. THE ASCERTAINMENT AND SOURCES OF VALID KNOWLEDGE 44

2.1 The Nature and Criterion of Valid Knowledge 45

2.2 The Self-validity of Knowledge (Svatah-Prāmāṇya-Vāda) 50

2.3 The Self-luminosity of Knowledge (Svatah-Prakāśa-Vāda 55

2.4 The Six Pramāṇas 58

(I). Perception (Pratyaksha) 58

(II). Inference (Anumāna) 63

(III). Comparison (Upamāna) 66

(IV). Postulation (Arthāpatti) 67

(V). Non-cognition (Anupalabdhi) 70

(VI). Śabda-pramāṇa 73

(A). Individual sounds and synthetic meanings 73

(B). Conditions of word combination 75

(C). Relational and non-relational sentences 78

(D). Levels of meaning 80

(E). The validity of śabda-pramāṇa 82

3. THE VEDAS AS ŚABDA-PRAMĀṆA 85

3.1 The Eternity of the Vedic Revelation 89

3.2 Īśvara as Revealer of the Vedas 97

3.3 The Necessity and Justification of the Vedas as a Pramāṇa 99

3.4 The Authority and Infallibility of the Vedic Revelation 109

3.5 The Qualifications of Śruti and Its Relation to Smṛiti 115

4. THE METHOD OF ŚABDA-PRAMĀṆA AS MEDIUM OF BRAHMAJÑĀNA 123

4.1 The Fundamental Problem of Avidyā and its Resolution 125

4.2 The Independent Authoritativeness of the Vedānta Sentences 132

4.3 The Distinctive Method of Word Manipulation As Mode of Instruction 143

(I). The Method of Adhyāropa (Superimposition) and Apavāda (De-Superimposition) 145
(II). The Method of Negation (Neti, Neti) 148

(III). The Method of Lakshaṇā (Implication) 150

4.4 The Lakshanā Exegesis of "That Thou Art (Tat Tvam Asi)". 156

5. THE NATURE OF BRAHMAJÑĀNA - THE PROCESS AND CONTEXT OF ITS ACQUISITION 162

5.1 The Character of Jñāna and its Differentiation from Activity (Karma) 163

5.2 The Simultaneity of Knowledge and Freedom 170

5.3 The Fourfold Means (Sādhana-catushṭaya) 173

5.4 Karmayoga as Preparation for Brahmajñāna 184

5.5 The Triple Process - Śravaṇa (Listening), Manana (Reflection) and Nididhyāsana (Contemplation) 188

(I). Śravaṇa (Listening) 193
(II). Manana (Reflection) 196
(III). Nididhyāsana (Contemplation) 206

PART TWO

6. ATTITUDES TOWARD SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY AND REVELATION FROM RAMMOHUN ROY TO RAMAKRISHNA 225

6.1 The British Impact 225

6.2 Rammohun Roy 232

6.3 Debendranath Tagore 238

6.4 Keshub Chandra Sen 244

6.5 Ramakrishna 254

6.6 The Influence of the Unitarians 261

7. VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT OF THE NATURE, ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE VEDAS 270

7.1 The Genesis of the Vedas and the Personal Foundations of their Authority 271

7.2 The Provisional and Limited Character of the Authority of the Vedas 274

7.3 The Distinction between Scriptural Revelation and Realization 278

7.4 The Connection between Sādhana-catushṭaya (the Fourfold Means) and the Acquisition of Liberating Knowledge 284

7.5 The Claim to a New Formula for Vedic Exegesis 288

7.6 Contrasts between the Statements of Vivekananda on the Vedas in the West and in India 294

8. KARMA (WORK), BHAKTI (WORSHIP) AND JÑĀNA (KNOWLEDGE) AS DIRECT AND INDEPENDENT WAYS TO MOKSHA 308

8.1 Karmayoga 313

8.2 Bhaktiyoga 327

8.3 Jñānayoga 337

9. THE MEANING AND AUTHORITATIVENESS OF ANUBHAVA IN VIVEKANANDA 356

9.1 The Rationale and Significance of Anubhava 357

9.2 The Method of Rājayoga 360

9.3 The Nature of Samādhi as a Source of Knowledge 363

(I). Samādhi as Highest Level of Mental Activity 364
(II). Samādhi as Method of Concentration 366
(III). Samādhi as Death of the Mind and Absence of Duality 370
(IV). Samādhi as Direct Perception or Objective Knowledge 372

9.4 A Critical Overview of Rājayoga as a Means to Brahmajñāna 375

CONCLUSION 395

NOTES 429

BIBLIOGRAPHY 504

GLOSSARY 517

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI.U.	Aitareya Upanishad
B.G.	Bhagavadgītā
Bhāmatī	Bhāmatī of Vācaspati Miśra
B.S.	Brahma-sūtra
BR.U.	Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad
CH.U.	Chāndogya Upanishad
CW	Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda
IS.U.	Īśā Upanishad
KA.U.	Kaṭha Upanishad
KE.U.	Kena Upanishad
MA.U.	Māṇḍūkya Upanishad
MA.U.K.	Māṇḍūkya Upanishad Kārikā of Gauḍapāda
M.S.J.	Pūrva-Mīmānsā Sūtras of Jaimini
MU.U.	Muṇḍaka Upanishad
N.S.	Naishkarmyasiddhi of Sureśvara
N.Y.S.G.	Nyāya Sūtras of Gotama
PR.U.	Praśna Upanishad
SV.U.	Śvetāśvatara Upanishad
TA.U.	Taittirīya Upanishad
T.B.	Tattvabodha of Shankara
V.P.	Vedānta Paribhāshā of Dharmarāja
V.S.	Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda

The letter 'B' added to the abbreviation of any text (as BR.U.B) indicates the commentary (bhāshya) of Shankara on the said text. Thus B.G.B. means Shankara's bhāshya on the Bhagavadgītā.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

In transcribing Sanskrit into Roman characters, the system used by M. Monier Williams in A Sanskrit-English Dictionary has been, with some simplifications, followed. The accentuation of Sanskrit words is not marked, and a single symbol (-) has been used for all long vowels.

The vowels are:

a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛi	ṛī
lṛi	lṛī	e	ai	o	au		

. ṉ or ṃ — either true Anusvāra ṉ or the symbol of any nasal.

: ḥ — symbol called Visarga.

The consonants are:

k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
c	ch	j	jh	ñ
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ
t	th	d	dh	n
p	ph	b	bh	m
y	r	l	ḷ	ḷh
v				
ś	sh	s	h	

As far as the transliteration of names is concerned, a selective approach has been adopted. Diacritical marks have not been used for the two most common names in this study, Shankara and Swami Vivekananda. The names of more recent figures such as Rammohun Roy and Keshub Chandra Sen have also not been transliterated. In these cases, we have retained the spelling most generally used in the literature of that period. Diacritical marks have also not been used for familiar names such as Krishna, Ramanuja, etc. Diacritical marks, however, have been used for the more classical names such as Yājñavalkya, Maitreyī, Naciketā, etc. Sanskrit terms are underlined throughout the study.

NOTE ON CAPITALIZATION

The Sanskrit alphabet does not contain any capital letters, and their use, in this study, has been kept to a minimum. Only the names of specific texts (e.g. Bhagavadgītā, Brahma-sūtra) and systems of thought (e.g. Nyāya, Sāṃkhya) are spelt with initial capitals. In order to differentiate and highlight a very special usage and meaning, certain English words are spelt with initial capitals. These are primarily terms such as Awareness, Consciousness, Witness, Knower, Subject, Self, Seer, etc., all of which are used to define the nature of brahman. Their special use will be made clear in the course of this study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted beyond all measure to my guru, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, at whose feet I learnt everything of significance that I know about Advaita Vedānta. In his thorough knowledge of the śruti, his clarity and lucidity of vision and communication, and the spontaneous expression of brahmajñāna in his life, he fully exemplifies the Upanishadic ideal of the teacher. He has taught me to see that the Upanishads, properly approached and unfolded as a pramāṇa, afford a knowledge which is an immediate and sufficient solution to the perennial human quest for fullness. I have been encouraged and strengthened by his approval of this study and the continuous interest he has shown in it.

I am most grateful to Dr. Ursula King for her unfailing kindness and assistance throughout my stay at the University of Leeds, and for her close supervision and guidance of this research in all its stages. Her criticisms and suggestions have always been of great benefit.

My wife, Geeta, has been a tremendous source of support and encouragement. In spite of the pressing demands of her own profession, she has always happily found the time to diligently proofread every draft of this work, and has patiently listened to and considered its various arguments. For all of this, and much more, I am thankful.

I must acknowledge the continuous support and understanding of my father and mother for a son whose unusual interest must have initially caused them great anxiety, but whose freedom they never sought to hinder.

This research was made possible by a three-year scholarship from the University of Leeds. The University of Leeds also provided a grant which enabled me to undertake a study/visit to India. For these, and for the many facilities provided, I wish to express my appreciation.

INTRODUCTION

Background

An awareness of the primary interests which motivate the undertaking of any study is important for both the researcher and the reader. These interests strongly influence, consciously or unconsciously, the focus and methods of the study and the concerns within that focus which are highlighted. On the part of the researcher, this awareness could assist in discovering and checking prejudices and preconceptions which may condition his perception of the material examined and the results of the study.

All major schools of Indian philosophical and religious thought originated and developed with the aim of providing a viable means for the attainment of moksha. This is not to affirm that this end was uniformly conceived in all systems. The point is that Indian philosophy always had a "practical" or "pragmatic" end in view, if these terms can be admitted in respect of the quest for moksha. This subservience to the accomplishment of moksha is what makes it difficult to distinguish Indian philosophy from Indian religion. Philosophy aimed at the transcending or overcoming of human suffering, however conceived, and part of the criteria for evaluating

any system was its adequacy as a means to moksha. Even Gotama, the founder of the Indian school of logical thought (Nyāya), begins his sūtras by affirming that the aim of logic is the attainment of the supreme good. Jijñāsā or the desire to know, from which is derived jijñāsu (the one who desires to know), was in relation to mumukshutvam or the intense desire for moksha, from which is derived mumukshu (the one who desires moksha). In other words, the jijñāsu was a mumukshu. It is to explain this characteristic that T.W. Organ describes Indian philosophy as sādhana ("the process of the perfecting of man").[1] Philosophical texts and treatises were written with the mumukshu in view, and often commenced by identifying the aspirant aimed at and the qualifications necessary for a successful undertaking of the inquiry.

The centrality of the moksha-concern is one of the keys to understanding the motivation which prompts Indian philosophy, and the nature of argument both within and among the various schools. It is also the interest, as will become evident, which influences and lies at the centre of this study. This research is undertaken in the general spirit of philosophical inquiry as sādhana. In the specific context of the Advaita Vedānta system with which it is concerned, this study is an exercise in the discipline of manana or rational reflection upon some of its fundamental propositions. This discipline, which is explained more fully in the body of this work, aimed essentially at clarification, evaluation, the removal of doubts and the

assessment of rival views. Various methods were used in achieving these aims, including scriptural exegesis and philosophical argument. It offered the scope for both criticism and creativity, and it is in the tradition of this kind of analysis that this work partly lies. In its treatment of Vivekananda, however, this study uses methods, raises issues and suggests explanations which are not within the usual province of manana. The use of historical analysis, for example, to account for some of Vivekananda's views and to trace some of the influences on him is not a traditional concern of manana. Manana has always been more concerned with assessing a particular view in relation to the gain of moksha, than with tracing or accounting for its genesis and development. These two concerns, however, need not be exclusive. We are perhaps in a better position to understand and evaluate a proposition when we have some knowledge of its development, and there is certainly a much greater scope for the application of the historical method to the study of Hinduism. One of the reasons for the lack of distinction by modern commentators between some of the views of Shankara and Vivekananda is precisely because of the non-application of this method, particularly to the study of Vivekananda.

My first encounter with Advaita Vedānta and the literature of neo-Hinduism was through the writings of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902). I avidly read these while I was still a secondary school student in Trinidad, West Indies, where my ancestors had migrated from northern India sometime

around the middle of the nineteenth century. I grew up with a marked awareness of Hinduism, attributable in a large measure to the fact that both of my grandfathers were traditional Hindu priests (purohitas). Vivekananda's life and writings had a tremendous impact upon my thinking. They radiated an irresistible idealism, confident strength and enthusiastic fervour which still moves me. They afforded me a glimpse into the depths and profundity of Hindu religious thought.

With reflection, it would seem that Vivekananda's appeal must also be explicable in the light of some of the factors which account for his immense popularity in late nineteenth-century India. The content and tone of Vivekananda's lectures in North America, Europe and India clearly evince a powerful reaction to the cultural imperialism which inevitably accompanied British colonialism. In terms of religion, this asserted itself as the natural superiority of the Christian tradition. Trinidad, like India, had a long colonial past. Close study of the many addresses presented to Vivekananda during a triumphal tour of India after returning from his first visit to the West clearly reveal the immense sense of pride and confidence which his successful reception abroad had awakened at home. It was felt that Hinduism, for so long despised, had at long last found an authentic voice capable of demonstrating its strength and sufficiency even in the homelands of its political masters. The following excerpts from addresses of welcome presented to Vivekananda in India reflect the typical sentiments aroused by his Western visit.

We cannot adequately express our indebtedness to you for making the people of the West know the catholicity of our religion and for impressing upon the minds of the savants of the West the truth that there are more things in the Philosophy of the Hindus than are dreamt of in the Philosophy of the West.2

If today we rejoice at the results of your work in Christian lands, it is because the eyes of men in and outside of India are thereby being opened to the inestimable value of the spiritual heritage of the pre-eminently religious Hindu nation.3

Like so many contemporary Hindus, my first systematic exposure to Hindu religious thought came through Vivekananda. My reading of Vivekananda convinced me that as far as Advaita and indeed Hinduism as a whole was concerned, the supreme authoritative source of knowledge was a very special experience (anubhava) which revealed beyond any doubts the fundamental truths about the universe and the significance of life. This experience was presented as the very core of Hinduism, the only meaningful end to be sought after and the culmination of the Hindu spiritual quest. It was affirmed as offering the possibility of a direct insight into the nature of reality and therefore, as the only ultimately credible source of spiritual knowledge. In relation to the knowledge of matters beyond the range of sense apprehension, Vivekananda asserted that this experience afforded a directness and conclusiveness which could only be likened to ordinary sense perception. Anubhava was presented by him as possessing a self-valid quality which obviated the need for faith or reliance on any source of spiritual knowledge which one could not personally verify. In fact, all authoritative sources were subordinate to anubhava and all spiritual disciplines were intended only

for its attainment.

Along with my understanding of the paramount epistemological status of this experience, I also imbibed from Vivekananda what I considered to be the single established view of the scripture (śruti) in Advaita and in Hinduism. Śruti was just a record in words of this experience as attained by others. At best, it informed us of what they had attained and the means which they employed. The aspirant, however, could not simply rely with faith on this testimony, which was only a second-hand report. As the testimony of another, the knowledge which one may gain by a study of the śruti lacks conclusiveness and freedom from doubt. This knowledge is presented by Vivekananda as "theoretical" information which can never lead to moksha. To be definitive, this knowledge had to be verified, and this was possible only through a similar direct experience (anubhava). As a source of knowledge therefore, even the śruti was subordinate to anubhava.

Partly as a result of Vivekananda's influence, I went to India very soon after completing my undergraduate studies at the University of the West Indies, in order to study with Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a contemporary teacher of Advaita.[4] In line with Vivekananda's thinking, I conceived of any scriptural studies I might undertake as primarily informing me of the method by which I could obtain conclusive knowledge through anubhava. I spent over two years as a student of Swami Dayananda Saraswati at Rishikesh and Bombay

studying with him Shankara's (788-820) commentaries on the major Upanishads, the Bhagavadgītā and portions of the Brahma-sūtra.[5] We also read many of the independent introductory texts attributed to Shankara such as Aparokshānubhūti, Ātmabodha, Tattvabodha, Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, Vākyavritti and Dṛigdṛiśyaviveka, etc. The study of these texts was accompanied by training in some of the practical spiritual disciplines associated with the Advaita tradition.

The principal method of study consisted of the reading of these texts in the original Sanskrit and their exegesis with the aid of Shankara's commentaries. Formal classroom-type teaching was complemented by ample daily opportunities for more informal discussions (satsaṅga). My study of the commentaries of Shankara made me aware, for the first time, of a radically different understanding of the nature and function of the śruti in relation to the gain of spiritual knowledge (brahmajñāna). This new understanding centred around Shankara's perception and treatment of śruti as śabda-pramāṇa, a source of valid knowledge (pramāṇa) constituted of words (śabda). This conception and all of its far-reaching implications was in thorough and remarkable contrast to the status and functions assigned to śruti in Vivekananda's representation of Advaita and of modern Hinduism generally. The śabda-pramāṇa approach offered a very different rationale for the necessity of the śruti.

Unlike Vivekananda, who presented the affirmations of śruti as having only a hypothetical or provisional validity and needing the verification which only anubhava could provide,

Shankara argued for śruti as the unique and self-valid source of brahmajñāna. In relation to the gain of brahmajñāna, all other sources of knowledge (pramāṇas) were subordinate to śruti. Knowledge of matters beyond the apprehension of the senses was attained only through the sentences of the śruti. In important contrast to Vivekananda's argument that the declarations of śruti needed further verification to become conclusive was Shankara's contention that moksha is the immediate result of a clear understanding of the śruti sentences. Nothing beyond śruti-derived knowledge was required. It was also clear from Swami Dayananda's approach to teaching and Shankara's commentaries that this view of the śruti as a valid source of knowledge was connected with a methodology of unfolding and imparting brahmajñāna. Particular methods of teaching and instructing were meant to overcome the peculiar problems of communicating this knowledge. This is a matter which we explore in this study.

Later on, in the course of my work at Leeds University for the Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies, I found that Vivekananda's interpretation of the significance of śruti in connection with the acquisition of brahmajñāna was continuously identified by modern commentators as being the original position adopted by Shankara. Very fundamental differences were uncritically overlooked. The general conclusions of current studies on Shankara suggested that he also saw a special experience (anubhava) as the ultimately valid source of our knowledge of brahman. These studies,

which we have reviewed and summarized in Chapter 1, claimed that Shankara, like Vivekananda, accorded only a provisional validity to the affirmations of the Vedas, and did not perceive these texts to be, in any way, a unique source of knowledge. Many felt that the only reason for Shankara's recourse to the śruti was the desire to gain the support of a traditional authority for his own views. It was apparent also that Shankara's Advaita was being classified as a form of mysticism on the basis that it posited this experience (anubhava) as the highest source of knowledge. Anubhava, in other words, possessed what William James refers to as a "noetic quality".[6] Contemporary studies on Shankara seem to have missed the significance of the connection he proposes between śruti as a pramāṇa, brahmajñāna and the immediacy of moksha.

Aims and Methods

The central concern and focus of this study then is the examination of these notable differences of views between the foremost modern exponent of Advaita and its classical systematizer, concerning the authoritative source of the knowledge of brahman. The lack of distinction made by modern commentators between the respective positions of both men on this crucial issue further justifies this undertaking. The significance of the clarification and demonstration of these divergences which this study attempts has to be viewed in the light of Vivekananda's

unquestionable impact on the contemporary understanding of Advaita and, more broadly, of Hinduism. As Ninian Smart points out, "not only did he interpret Hinduism to the West so eloquently, but he also interpreted it to India itself".[7] " A shrinking world", continues Smart, "will surely recognize how much it owes to him, the first man to bring home to the consciousness of the Western world at large the deeper significances of the Sanatana Dharma".[8] A.L. Basham also assesses the legacy of Vivekananda in laudative terms.

> It is certainly far greater than any Western historian or most Indian historians would have suggested at the time of his death. The passing of the years and the many stupendous and unexpected events which have occurred since then suggest that in centuries to come he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world, especially as far as Asia is concerned, and as one of the most significant figures in the whole history of Indian religion, comparable in importance to such great teachers as Shankara and Ramanuja....9

Agehananda Bharati was not making a completely wild exaggeration in asserting that "Modern Hindus derive their knowledge of Hinduism from Vivekananda, directly or indirectly".[10]

In spite of the acknowledged impact and influence of Vivekananda, but paradoxically, perhaps, because of it, the Hindu tradition is yet to critically assess the nature of this impact. More than eighty years after his death the general attitude towards Vivekananda is still largely the understandable response of adulation with which he was first greeted after his return to India from the West. It seems as if the memory of the genuine pride and self-respect which Vivekananda instilled in Hindus still precludes critical

evaluation of his contribution. It is this widespread impact, however, which makes a more objective appraisal necessary.

Vivekananda's influence is so pervasive that it is a difficult and almost impossible task to separately identify and extricate the elements which he contributed to the contemporary understanding of Hinduism. Not only did he largely formulate this interpretation, but he also gave it the language in which it is articulated. There is very little in modern Hindu, particularly Vedānta, apologetic writing which does not carry the clear imprint of Vivekananda's influence. The fact that Vivekananda was a representative of the system of Advaita did not weaken the impression which he made on the whole of Hinduism. Because Advaita, through Vivekananda, was the first Hindu system to be so elaborately presented to the West, its comprehension has considerably shaped the approach to Hinduism in India and abroad. This was fostered by Vivekananda's vision and presentation of Advaita as the natural culmination of all Hindu religious thought. From his basis in Advaita, he generalized in his lectures and writings about the nature and features of Hinduism as a whole. In his own time he was represented and perceived as the spokesman and champion of Hinduism and not of any specific tradition within it.

One of the principal aims of this study, therefore, is to undertake this much needed clarification and appraisal of Vivekananda's legacy. While we are concerned mainly with

his estimation of śruti and anubhava, this has unavoidably led us to consider other very important aspects of his interpretation of Advaita, many of which are today seen as axiomatic features of Hinduism. There is, of course, the entire question of the nature and derivation of the special experience which he upheld as the only authoritative source of brahmajñāna. He identified the validity of this experience with that of sense perception and equated it with the methods of gaining knowledge in the empirical sciences. This is part of his wider attempt to draw parallels between Advaita and science which we seek to evaluate in this study. Directly connected to Vivekananda's reinterpretation of the significance of śruti is his elaboration of the methods of karmayoga, bhaktiyoga, jñānayoga and rājayoga as direct and independent means to the attainment of moksha. This is a very well known argument in contemporary Hindu writing and we assess how far Vivekananda has successfully demonstrated its validity. There are also many other related issues concerning the nature and function of the teacher (guru) and the value of reason, etc.

Our aim to consider, in respect of Shankara and Vivekananda, what constitutes the ultimate source or sources of brahmajñāna required us to first clearly establish Shankara's viewpoint. The reason is that Vivekananda's representation of Advaita has exerted an overwhelming influence on contemporary interpretations of Shankara's epistemology, and we have already noted the lack of distinction made by

modern commentators on the respective positions of both men. It is paradoxical, but nevertheless true, that in order to demonstrate contrasts between Shankara and Vivekananda,it was initially necessary to free the interpretation of Shankara from the extensive domination of Vivekananda. We undertake the analysis of Shankara in Part One therefore, with these prevalent interpretations in mind, and which will result in refuting their validity.

In this investigation, we have not limited ourselves only to the task of using historical-critical methods of analyzing textual sources to establish the positions of both men. We also seek, particularly in the case of Vivekananda, to make certain evaluations, and it is important to clarify the criteria upon which these are based. Our assessments of Vivekananda are in relation to the Advaita tradition to which he professes his allegiance. We examine his innovations and contributions with reference to fundamental Advaita premises as formulated by Shankara, retaining the attainment of moksha as our central concern. While this method of looking at Vivekananda, together with the kinds of philosophical analysis and criticism employed, is profoundly influenced by the insights gained as a result of my personal experience of studying and living with a teacher of Advaita in India, it is by no means subjective or arbitrary. This method would be objectionable if it consisted of applying to Vivekananda a set of criteria and standards of judgement belonging to a system, Hindu or non-Hindu, with entirely different presuppositions. This

is a definite problem, for example, when the norms and premises of one religious tradition are employed, consciously or unconsciously, in considering another tradition. In this case, however, our criteria are grounded in the presuppositions of the tradition to which Vivekananda belongs. It is in the context of this tradition that our evaluations are primarily made. Vivekananda's epistemology is rooted in the authority of a special experience and together with the methods derived from the Advaita tradition, we also utilize forms of philosophical analysis developed in the recent study of religious experience.

This study examines how Shankara and Vivekananda understood the nature of the source of brahmajñāna and the processes by which this knowledge is gained. It seeks to identify the areas of agreement or disagreement over this paramount epistemological question. The classical schools of Indian philosophy demonstrate deep concern and reflection about the methods of acquiring knowledge, secular and spiritual. It is important to see whether and how, through Vivekananda, this preoccupation has developed or been modified in contemporary Hinduism. It is not within the scope of this study to sketch in full the system of Advaita as developed either by Shankara or Vivekananda. At the same time, however, it is impossible to entirely avoid some of the wider issues of Advaita. Shankara's rationale, for instance, for the source of our knowledge of brahman is connected to his understanding of the nature

of brahman and the problem of avidyā. We have tried to introduce such discussions only where they are relevant to the central issue of our study. We have not attempted either to comprehensively account for or trace all the sources of Vivekananda's views. Chapter 6, however, has been entirely devoted to outlining certain significant developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in India, particularly with reference to the authority of the Vedas, which would have influenced him. The diverse and complex influences on the shaping of Hindu religious thought in this period still await detailed study. In the chapters treating Vivekananda, we have sought, wherever possible, to identify some of the sources of particular views.

One of the important methodological issues connected with a study of this kind is the extent to which a student belonging to any religious tradition can accurately interpret this tradition. In the field of religious studies, however, one gets the impression that this suspicion is aroused more in relation to the "committed" student working on so-called "non-Christian" traditions. Perhaps it is felt, for some reasons, that "scholarly objectivity" is generally less evident or possible here. While it is true that closeness and commitment to a tradition can be an impediment to dispassionate inquiry, and one always has to be aware of this, the advantages which such a closeness can confer are not always sufficiently recognized and valued. The study of religion is in many

ways unique. The phenomena of any religion are not circumscribed by what can be easily observed and dissected, and it is in acquaintance with these other dimensions that closeness can be an inestimable asset. The empathy which the phenomenologist strives hard to assiduously cultivate is naturally associated with commitment.

In the case of Advaita, for example, the concept of adhikāra (fitness to inquire) is very significant. Śruti is understood as offering a solution to a particular human predicament, but the answers are not meaningful until the significance of the questions are appreciated by the student. As a valid source of knowledge (pramāṇa), śruti is meaningful and fruitful to the student who has found himself in that predicament and who enjoys a certain disposition of intellect and emotion. A student (adhikārī) who approaches the teacher and the śruti in this attitude has an understanding and experience totally different from the "detached" observer. My own study of Advaita through the conventional guru-śishya (teacher-student) relationship and method, which plays an important part in this work, has granted a vision and comprehension of the tradition which I am yet to find in contemporary studies on Shankara. It is possible, however, that commitment can lead to selectivity of a certain kind in any study. Commitment may sensitize one to some issues which are highlighted more than others. My own closeness to Hinduism expresses itself in the concern of this study with moksha and matters related to its attainment. In studying Shankara and Vivekananda, there are other issues

which someone with different motives and interests may prefer to underline.

Use of Sources

Many more studies are available on Shankara than on Vivekananda, but these have concentrated largely on various aspects of his exposition of Advaita and have concerned themselves little with the basic question of his epistemology.[11] On the whole, epistemology is a very much neglected area of study in contemporary works on Hinduism. In Chapter 1, we have attempted to review current opinions on the epistemology of Shankara, and in the course of our discussions we have indicated our departure from these. Perhaps the contemporary absence of interest in questions concerning Shankara's epistemology is not unrelated to Vivekananda's own impact and approach to the subject, and the view that the latter is not different from that of Shankara. This is a matter, however, to which we can return with greater clarity at the end of this study.

Shankara selected the medium of commentaries (bhāshyas) to express his views, and for this study we have relied primarily on those commentaries of his which are widely accepted as being authentic. Shankara's commentaries on the following works have been cited:

1. Aitareya Upanishad
2. Bhagavadgītā

3. Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad
4. Brahma-sūtra
5. Chāndogya Upanishad
6. Īśā Upanishad
7. Kaṭha Upanishad
8. Kena Upanishad
9. Māṇḍūkya Upanishad and Māṇḍūkya Upanishad Kārikā of Gaudapāda
10. Muṇḍaka Upanishad
11. Praśna Upanishad
12. Taittirīya Upanishad

Of these twelve commentaries, the authenticity of only the commentaries on the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad and the Māṇḍūkya Upanishad Kārikā of Gaudapāda have been seriously questioned. The other works have all been listed by K.H. Potter among the authentic works of Shankara.[12] Our references to these two works, however, have been very few indeed and none of our principal arguments depend on them. Similarly, we have avoided using and establishing any conclusions on the evidence of the many independent expository treatises (prakaraṇa) attributed to Shankara. The authority of all of these, except perhaps for the Upadeśasāhasrī, remains very doubtful. We have made only a single reference to the Tattvabodha in Chapter 2. We have sought objectivity in the presentation of Shankara by citing principally and frequently from his bhāshyas. For this reason, we have made very limited use of secondary writings from the Advaita tradition. In the major chapters on Shankara, the writings of Sureśvara, Vācaspati, and Sadānanda have been only alluded to on a few occasions to amplify certain arguments.

In the case of Vivekananda, most of the published secondary sources are expository in character and have been written mainly by members of the Ramakrishna Mission which he founded in 1897. These writings tend, on the whole, to be hagiographical in nature. We are not aware of any detailed critical study of Vivekananda's epistemology, or of any attempt to analyze his formulation of Advaita with reference to Shankara. In the course of this study we have cited the generally held view that there is little or no divergence between both thinkers and this may explain the lack of comparative studies.

The primary sources for our study of Vivekananda therefore, are his published writings, lectures, letters and interviews. These, along with various miscellaneous sayings and newspaper reports, constitute the bulk of the diverse material comprising the eight volumes of The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda. Unlike Shankara, Vivekananda did not use the medium of bhāshyas to express his views and his only written commentary, significantly on the Yoga-sūtras of Patañjali, is included in these volumes. The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda leave much to be desired in terms of chronology,[1] indexing and the misleading titles of lectures, but they still remain the principal sources for any study of Vivekananda's thought during his short public ministry from his first major lecture on September 11th, 1893, to his death on July 4th, 1902. Vivekananda wrote very little, and for the study of his thought we must rely mainly on his lectures as recorded largely by his faithful English secretary and disciple,

J.J. Goodwin. There is a considerable repetitiveness of themes and ideas in these lectures which ensure their reliability. It is no exaggeration, however, to add that because of poor chronology and indexing of the material, it is necessary to painstakingly read the contents of every single volume in order to ascertain Vivekananda's views on any single issue.

Outline

This study is structured into two parts. In Part One (Chapters 1-5), the discussion on Shankara is presented. Chapter 1 is a survey of current interpretations of the significance of śruti and anubhava in Shankara, most of which are questioned in our analysis. In Chapter 2, we consider the nature of the six valid sources of knowledge accepted by the school of Advaita Vedānta, and outline certain central epistemological theories held by its proponents. This discussion provides the basis and background for Chapter 3, where we treat Shankara's justification of the śruti as a valid source of knowledge (pramāṇa). Through words, whose references are finite objects known to us, śruti attempts to inform us of brahman which is unknown to us and which possesses none of the characteristics of anything known to us. In Chapter 4, we study the methods of instruction and exegesis suggested in Shankara's commentaries for dealing with this problem of communicating brahmajñāna. Chapter 5

considers Shankara's understanding of the nature of brahmajñāna, and its connection with moksha. We also seek there to provide an interpretation of the processes through which this knowledge is acquired, since some of the conclusions about Shankara's epistemology are derived from different perceptions about the character and aims of these processes.

In Part Two (Chapters 6-9), we present the discussion on Swami Vivekananda, and identify any areas and points of divergence from Shankara. Chapter 6 traces developments in attitudes towards scriptural authority and revelation during the period from Rammohun Roy (1774-1833) to Ramakrishna (1836-86), which appear to have influenced Vivekananda's epistemological views. We turn our attention in Chapter 7 to Vivekananda's understanding of the nature, authority and functions of the Vedas. Following on from this discussion, we seek in Chapter 8 to describe, compare and evaluate his arguments for different methods of attaining moksha. In the final chapter of this section, we try to understand the nature and assess the significance of the experience (anubhava) which Vivekananda posits as the ultimate source of valid spiritual knowledge.

Today, largely as a result of processes generated by Vivekananda himself, Hinduism no longer finds its adherents only among people of Indian descent. He initiated a world-wide interest in Hinduism and immeasurably influenced its contemporary understanding. In drawing the attention of the West to the richness of Hinduism, he also stimulated a

renewed interest among Hindus themselves. Perhaps the latter would not have been possible without the former. The legacy of his influence continues in many parts of the world through the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission. This analysis hopes to contribute to the contemporary study and understanding of Indian religions and the wider area of religious studies by examining very important aspects of the Vivekananda legacy. More importantly, we hope that it will lead to a more critical assessment of the character and value of this legacy. We live in times when religious traditions have become more aware of each other and of the need for dialogue as a means of mutual understanding and enrichment. The success of this process demands greater clarity and awareness on the part of each tradition of its fundamental perspective. This study would perhaps make its amplest contribution if it could, in some small way, stimulate the Hindu tradition into a renewed examination of vital aspects of its contemporary self-understanding which it has for long uncritically taken for granted.

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

A REVIEW OF CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ŚRUTI AND ANUBHAVA IN SHANKARA

In his well-known and widely used study, The Spiritual Heritage of India, Swami Prabhavananda writes:

> Indian philosophy is not merely metaphysical speculation, but has its foundation in immediate perception. God and the soul are regarded by the Hindu mind, not as concepts, speculative and problematical, as is the case in Western Philosophy, but as things directly known. They can be experienced not by a chosen few, but, under right conditions, by all humanity.1

Immediate perception, according to Prabhavananda, is the source from which springs all Indian thought. Another writer who, perhaps more than anyone else, has popularized this view in the West is Radhakrishnan. The Hindu philosophy of religion, in his view, starts from and returns to an experimental basis. In a popular work of his, The Hindu View of Life, Radhakrishnan writes:

> While fixed beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself no such limits. Intellect is subordinate to intuition, dogma to experience, outer expression to inward realization. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstractions or the celebration of ceremonies, but a kind of life or experience.... Religious experience is of a self-certifying character. It is svatassiddha.2

Proponents of this interpretation of Hinduism resist the use of the term, philosophy, as a description of any system of Indian thought. They seem to find its connotations of

speculation and intellectualism quite inapt. The term preferred is "darśana", often rendered as "direct vision" or "seeing". Chandradhar Sharma sums up this predilection in a representative manner.

> Western Philosophy has remained more or less true to the etymological meaning of 'philosophy', in being essentially an intellectual quest for truth. Indian philosophy has been, however, intensely spiritual and has emphasized the need of practical realization of truth. The word 'darshana' means 'vision' and also 'the instrument of vision'. It stands for the direct, immediate and intuitive vision of Reality, the actual perception of Truth, and also includes the means which lead to this realization.3

In this review, it is useful to focus on Radhakrishnan because of his wide influence, and the high esteem with which his views are generally regarded.[4] Early in his discussion, Radhakrishnan seeks to present the Advaita Vedānta attitude to the Vedas.[5] His views at this point can be summarized as follows:

1. Scriptural authority is accepted by Advaita as an independent means of knowledge.
2. The Vedas are eternal in terms of their significance and not as texts, for these are reuttered by Īśvara in each world age. The Vedas embody the ideal form of the universe, and since this is constant, the Vedas are described to be eternal.
3. The Vedas are of superhuman origin (apaurusheya) and express the mind of God. They reveal His character and embody His ideas.
4. Their validity is self-evident and direct, even as the light of the sun is the direct means for our knowledge of forms.

What is of significance at this point is that Radhakrishnan's brief discussion is the only place where he attempts to formulate and present the traditional Advaita attitude to the Vedas. Even here, however, his summary, as will be evident later, misrepresents the Advaita position and makes it appear, in some parts, contradictory. There is a conflict, for example, between the position that the authority of the Vedas is direct and self-evident, and the argument that their authority derives from God. In fact, his entire treatment of the pramāṇas, in relation to Advaita, is scant and inadequate. Although he does give some recognition at this point to the authoritativeness of the Vedas, as his argument develops, he presents a view of the Vedas which sharply contrasts with this earlier one. There is no hint of any awareness of the tension between both views, and it remains unresolved throughout his entire discussion. This unresolved tension between two different sets of assertions about the Vedas can be discerned in many other writers.

The Vedas, as far as Radhakrishnan is concerned, are the records of transcendental experiences and not texts of theological affirmations.

> The chief sacred scriptures of the Hindus, the Vedas, register the intuitions of the perfected souls. They are not so much dogmatic dicta as transcripts from life. They record the spiritual experiences of souls strongly endowed with the sense of reality. They are held to be authoritative on the ground that they express the experiences of the experts in the field of religion. If the utterances of the Vedas were uninformed by spiritual insight, they would have no claim to our belief.6

This understanding of the nature and derivation of these texts is a very common one. The conclusions of the Vedas are quite often presented as the fruits of laborious spiritual experiments conducted over a long period of time by the ancients. There is a deliberate and intentional attempt to draw a scientific analogy and image.

> The Upanisads which are the end of the Veda (vedānta) or the crown of the śruti (śruti-śiras) contain the discoveries made by the ancient seers in the realm of the spirit; they are a record of the declarations made by the sages and are designed to initiate the votary into the secrets of the intuitive or mystic experience. Even as in the sphere of physical science an investigator cannot afford to neglect the researches already made by others in the field, in the realm of the super-physical also a seeker of the truth must take into account the realisations of the sages. The appeal to the authority of śruti means no more and no less.7

In a very similar view, another writer sees the Vedas as

> the culmination of the experiences of various saints, "working independently in different places and times, on subjects of such unique type as God and soul, reality or unreality of Existence and so on".[8] They record what occurred during moments of exalted imagination in the minds of these saints.[9]

Closely linked to the idea of the Vedas as records of mystic experiences, and even more important, is the perception of their authority as being derived from the so-called self-certifying and intrinsically valid nature of these experiences. To cite Radhakrishnan again:

> The highest evidence is perception, whether it is spiritual or sensuous, and is capable of being experienced by us on compliance with certain conditions. The authoritativeness of the śruti is derived from the fact that it is but the expression of experience, and since experience is of a self-certifying character, the Vedas are said to be their own proof, requiring no support from elsewhere.10

The appeal to <u>śruti</u> therefore, is ultimately based on the validity of a particular experience. Only the latter is seen as capable of conveying a knowledge which is immediate and at the same time indubitable.[11] According to some writers, the basis of the traditional acceptance of the authority of this experience is the fact that it has always been of a uniform nature. The "spiritual experiments", in other words, have yielded an unvarying result.

> In the traditional view in which Shankara was brought up, the Hindu scriptures have an absolute authority - not because a personal God wrote them or inspired individuals to write them; but because they embody the fruits of the spiritual insight of many sages who had searched for ultimate truth with single-minded devotion. They are, so to say, the fruits of many spiritual experiments, all of which have yielded the same result.12

This experience, when recorded in language and transmitted through a succession of teachers and students, comes to be known as <u>śruti</u> (that which is heard). <u>Śruti</u> therefore, is "the visible garment of the experiences of the awakened soul".[13] Radhakrishnan seeks to justify this recording of experience (<u>anubhava</u>) in a linguistic medium, by arguing that while the former carries the greatest degree of certitude, it has a low degree of conceptual clarity.[14]

> This is why interpretation is necessary, and those interpretations are fallible and so require endless revision. Śruti attempts to say things which are not fully to be said.15

Besides the problem of reconciling the "highest degree of certitude" with "a low degree of conceptual clarity", this view starkly contrasts with earlier pronouncements about <u>sruti</u> as "eternal wisdom", and "the timeless rules of all created existence", possessing a direct and self-evident authority.

From the nature of <u>śruti</u> as the record of mystic or transcendental experiences, and the derivation of its authority from the self-certifying nature of the same, comes another important proposition of current opinion. This is the conclusion that for one who is in search of Self-knowledge, the declarations of the <u>śruti</u> have only a provisional validity. <u>Śruti</u> is not itself a definitive or conclusive source of knowledge. Mahadevan again draws his scientific analogy.

> The students of Vedanta are required to place faith in <u>śruti</u>, even as learners of science must begin with a sense of confidence in the scientific theories formulated by the master-minds in the field. The final test in Vedānta, however, is experience, just as in science the arbiters of theory are said to be facts....Śruti, to start with, is others' experience; and the knowledge one derives therefrom is but mediate (parokṣa). Unless this becomes immediate (aparokṣa), the goal of Vedānta which is self-realisation will not be reached.16

According to Menon and Allen, the recorded experiences are there only to guide us, but the "experiments" must be repeated in order that the conclusions can be tested and verified by us.[17] The truths of the <u>śruti</u> therefore, are not the monopoly of any exclusive group, but could be

ascertained and verified by anyone.[18]

> The Vedas therefore, contain truths which man could by the exercise of his own faculties discover, though it is to our advantage that they are revealed, seeing that not all men have the courage, time and equipment to face such an enterprise.19

A different view is expressed elsewhere by Radhakrishnan,

and śruti becomes a secondary and poor substitute for those incapable of the first-hand experience and confirmation of anubhava.

> Those who have had no direct insight into reality are obliged to take on trust the Vedic views which record the highest experiences of some of the greatest minds who have wrestled with this problem of apprehending reality. For the ordinary man the central truth of the ultimate consciousness is revealed, and not ascertained by any human evidence like that of perception or inference.20

This view of the function of the śruti is shared by Belvalkar, according to whom the Advaitin found it necessary to appeal to the authority of the śruti only because the experience upon which it was founded was beyond the reach of all. Whenever, Belvalkar claims, the scriptures are cited, it is merely for the purpose of supporting a conclusion "which has been reached independently of the scriptures".[21] Shankara's reliance on the śruti is sometimes seen only as an attempt to show his agreement with orthodox authority.[22] Śruti then, does not incontrovertibly establish anything, but awaits the confirmation of anubhava for the conversion of its hypothetical assertions into fact.

Radhakrishnan reveals his focus on experience by rejecting the traditional term jñāna because of its empirical associations, preferring the word anubhava,

which he renders as "integral experience".[23] Anubhava is elevated by him to the status of an independent pramāṇa and becomes the equal of direct perception (pratyaksha). It is the basis on which whatever we know and believe of the supersensual world depends. In his view then, śruti occupies a decidedly secondary position to direct mystical insight in the religious outlook of Shankara. Radhakrishnan claims that it is difficult to find support in the writings of Shankara for the view that inquiry into the Vedas is the only means to knowledge of brahman.[24] He is unambiguous in his final conclusion about the relationship between śruti and anubhava in Shankara.

> For him [Shankara], integral experience or anubhava is the basal fact. It is the highest religious insight. It supplies the proof - if proof be the name for it - of man's awareness of a spiritual reality.25

Radhakrishnan's final conclusions about the roles of śruti and anubhava in Shankara are shared by many other Indian writers. Prabhavananda also sees direct personal experience as the ultimate satisfactory proof in Shankara. The śruti is a mere provisional pointer along the way.[26] Sharma also upholds the view that immediate spiritual realization, which he terms, "supra-relational intuition", is the ultimate criterion of truth in Shankara. Like Radhakrishnan, he links up the authority of the Vedas in Shankara with the self-certifying nature of experience.[27] According to R.P. Singh, Shankara's conclusion that anubhava is the only pramāṇa of brahman is the result of the nature of the brahman-experience. In other words, epistemology is determined by experience. The nature of the object

determines the pramāṇa through which it can be known.[28] Whereas in some cases sensuous perception may be appropriate, in another case the nature of the object demands reliance only on spiritual perception (anubhava).[29] Singh emphasizes that all reasoning and reflection are only preparatory for what he terms the "scientia visionis", the final and highest court of appeal. Belvalkar argues for the superiority of experience over śruti, from what he sees to be the dominant role of the former in ordinary life.

> Reason - and by this term should be understood to include Analogy and the other Pramāṇas admitted by traditional Vedānta - gets its eventual sanction from Experience, and so likewise does the authority of the Scriptures. Scriptures are therefore subordinate to Reason where we are concerned with matters of actual sensuous anubhava, such as the heat of the fire. On the other hand, Reason has to yield the palm to the Scriptures where it is a question of matters where Scriptures can appeal to a distinct supra-sensuous experience of their own. Eventually the Vedānta acknowledges only one criterion of truth, viz. anubhava. Such being the case, it will certainly not do to style Vedānta as mere exegetics, or dogmatism, or theology, or whatever other appellation it may be fashionable to us to characterise the system.30

N.K. Devaraja is largely in agreement with the general view of the relationship between śruti and anubhava in Shankara.[31] The interesting point about Devaraja's analysis, however, is that he, unlike other writers, broadens the concept of experience. He acknowledges the central role of the pramāṇas in Shankara, but sees Shankara's insistence that brahman is to be known only through the śruti, merely as an expression of his "ultra-orthodox mood".[32] His reason for not seeing this as an inveterate tenet of Shankara seems to be due to the latter's emphasis

that brahman is not an object of scriptural knowledge.[33] Śruti is by no means unique in bringing about the final intuition of brahman. It is merely a more direct and effective means.

> All the pramānas play their part in bringing about that final intuition, and if Śaṅkara is at moments inclined to assign a higher place to śruti, it is probably because he feels that the utterances of the Upaniṣads, being vital poetic records of spiritual experience, can induce that intuition earlier than the mere negative operations of the logical understanding. Or, if we are unkind critics, we may say that, occasionally, the orthodox in Śaṅkara overwhelms the empiricist and rationalist in him.34

Devaraja, as mentioned, broadens the concept of experience with reference to Shankara. Experience is superior to śruti, not only in the sense of intuitive or mystical experience, but also in the wider sense of perceptual or everyday (loka) experience. This very interesting contention of Devaraja will be evaluated later, but here it is just necessary to state his evidence for this conclusion. It is based on two references from Shankara's commentary on the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad and the Brahma-sūtra. In the first quotation, that śruti must communicate in familiar concepts is seen as evidence for the superior authority of loka.

> It is not the purpose of the scripture to distort the nature of things; on the contrary, its aim is to make the unknown known as it is...Not a hundred illustrations can establish that fire is cold or that the sun gives out no heat. For other pramānas represent the objects to be different in nature. Nor is one pramāna contradicted by another. Every pramāna makes known only what is not an object of another pramāna. Nor can scripture make the unknown intelligible without depending upon the relationship of words and their meaning as recognized by the loka.35

The second quotation is actually one of Shankara's hypothetical opponents (pūrvapakshin) whose voice Devaraja perplexingly

thinks Shankara employs to assert the superiority of everyday experience.

> Yukti or reasoning which affirms the unseen on the analogy of the seen, is nearer to experience than Śruti, for the latter's authority is traditional merely.36

Taken by themselves, both references are very tenuous grounds for asserting his conclusions. The first merely avers the authority of each pramāṇa in its respective sphere and suggests the absence of any conflict among them. The implication that Shankara resorts to an opponent to voice his views makes the second reference very insubstantial evidence.

Hiriyanna's conclusions about the respective roles of śruti and anubhava in Shankara are somewhat surprising, in the light of the fact that he is one of the few writers who discuss in fair detail the pramāṇa concept.[37] He sees no essential difference between the Pūrva-Mīmānsā concept of the Vedas and the Advaita concept, except the role of īśvara in the latter's scheme.[38] With this background, it is indeed strange that he also, like the other writers considered, credits the intuitive experience with a separate, superior, and final epistemological status.

> The ultimate philosophic fact is no doubt to be known through the testimony of the Upaniṣads; but if the knowledge conveyed by it is to bring real freedom, one should verify it by one's own living experience in the form 'I am Brahman' or Aham Brahma Asmi. It is this immediate experience or direct intuition of the Absolute which is described as vidvadanubhava to distinguish it from lay experience, that accordingly becomes the final criterion of Truth here.39

Hiriyanna is also united with others in concluding that the Upanishads should in the last resort be regarded as recording

the intuitional knowledge of the ancient sages. While the Upanishads are necessary, they have only an instrumental value in conveying merely mediate knowledge, In resorting to direct experience, one has to go beyond the texts.[40]

In view of the consensus among Eastern scholars about the primacy of anubhava over śruti, it is perhaps not surprising to find their Western counterparts generally agreeing with their conclusions. Smart endorses the opinion of the essentially mystical nature of knowledge in Shankara.

> The full understanding of his system and its conclusive 'verification' comes through the non-dualistic realization of identity between Self and holy Power. Thus knowledge, at the higher level of metaphysical truth, is not theoretical; but it is essentially contemplative or mystical.41

As a direct consequence of his stress on an experience, Smart argues for a basic similarity between Mahāyāna and Advaita. He ventures so far as to dismiss the dependence of the latter on the Vedas as being of no consequence, since revelation, in his view, culminates in non-dual experience.[42] The pivotal role of the mystical experience considerably modifies, according to Smart, the intrinsic-validity concept of the scripture. This brings Shankara, in Smart's view, very close to the Yoga standpoint.

> In other words, the scriptures are valid at the higher level in so far as they point towards a certain supreme experience. In the last resort therefore, their truth is pragmatic and provisional. What confirms them is direct experience, and by then they are useless. This clearly modifies considerably the concept of their being self-authenticated. Here Śankara's view is not far from that of Yoga, namely that the scriptures originate from the supreme perception or intuition of yogis. Hence the issue

> about the validity of revelation is shifted to that of the trustworthiness of mystical - in particular yogic - experience.43

Smart reiterates this position in his later work, The Yogi and the Devotee, emphasizing the place of dhyāna and the Yoga parallel.[44]

R. de Smet is one of the few writers treating substantially Shankara's method, and emphasizing the primacy of śruti.[45] He describes Shankara as a śrutivādin (one for whom the śruti is the primary authority), and discusses the superiority of śruti in relation to all other pramāṇas.

> As to testimony, it is of two kinds; pauruseya and apauruseya, i.e., it either originates from an individual witness (purusa) or it does not. Smrti, for instance, is mere human tradition and its authority is therefore defective, for men are fallible. But Śruti (i.e., the Vedic and Brāhmanic scriptures, especially the Upanisads) is entirely free from dependence upon individual authors; it is absolutely infallible and its authority is supreme.46

With such a clear comprehension of the unrivalled status of the Vedas in Shankara, and a detailed discussion of his procedure in interpreting the same, one expected de Smet to diverge in his conclusion from the general view. It comes as an anti-climax to find in him the self-same unacknowledged and unresolved contradiction between an initial emphasis on the unmitigated authority of śruti and their reliance for verification on an experience. This tension was also highlighted in the case of Radhakrishnan.

> Thus Vedic faith, which at first was a mere reliance on the intuition of the ṛṣis, becomes fully validated when it turns into that final transcendental experience.47

Writers who argue for anubhava as the true pramāṇa

UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
LEEDS

of brahmajñāna generally treat the process of knowledge in Shankara as progressing through three different phases. The original reference to this three-fold process comes from the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad where Yājñavalkya, instructing his wife Maitreyī, says,

> The Self, my dear Maitreyī, should be realised - should be heard of, reflected on and meditated upon. By the realization of the Self, my dear, through hearing, reflection and meditation, all this is known.48

Śravana (listening) is the initial exposure to the content of the Upanishads as unfolded by the qualified teacher. Manana (reflecting) is the employment of reason to refute and eliminate doubts arising within one's own mind, as well as objections tendered by rival schools of thought. These two processes are generally characterized as entirely intellectual and merely preliminary. They culminate in the final phase of nididhyāsana (contemplation or meditation), where the truth of the Self is directly apprehended, all doubts finally fall away and freedom (moksha) is attained. In the general presentation of this three-fold process, it is the final procedure that is considered salient and all-important. The contention is that it is only here that the gain of knowledge in the true sense occurs.

Deep reflection (manana) leads the aspirant to the next stage, namely, nididhyāsana. This third stage called nididhyāsana is constant and uninterrupted meditation or intense contemplation on the convinced doctrines of tat tvam asi and other mahāvākyas propounding the Advaitic mystic doctrine. This nididhyāsana is the immediate preparation for the Brahmajñāna or the transcendental experience, i.e. the supra-mental consciousness. After nididhyāsana, the aspirant attains to the experience that transcends all world-consciousness and ego-consciousness. In that experience he realizes the truth of the Upanisadic utterance:

'There is no diversity here'.49

Mere śravana, it is contended, will not take the student very far.[50] Only the direct and immediate knowledge which uninterrupted meditation (nididhyāsana) affords, enables the mediate instruction of the teacher to dispel false notions.[51] The experience which supposedly confers true knowledge is sometimes presented as one over which the student has no control, but upon which he simply waits after completing śravana and manana.

> He has listened with faith to the guru's teaching and explanation of the Śruti; with the help of all the resources of secular reasoning, he has successfully contradicted all the objections that could be raised against the doctrine he has heard; now, all the obstacles to advaita - Knowledge being destroyed, his mind is peaceful and there is nothing more to drive him away from the contemplation of the Truth; calm and happy, he concentrates all his thoughts on the revealed truth and awaits silently the flash-like illumination which is to change his high but still complex knowledge into the simplest and most immediate consciousness of the Absolute.52

Writers who affirm the primacy of anubhava are generally vague on the actual nature of the experience which gives us immediate knowledge of brahman. Anubhava is generally equated by them with intuition and presented as a form of "direct insight", "direct access" or "direct acquaintance". It is described as a form of internal perception, comparable to external perception, on the basis that perception (internal or external) alone can give us direct knowledge of any existent entity.[53] Anubhava is not a movement around the object of knowledge, but a vision from the inside.[54] In its immediacy, it is more like feeling than thinking, and transcends the discursive, reasoning

functions of the mind. Unlike our knowledge of the physical world, which progresses in stages, enlightenment, like all intuitions, descends in a sudden flash when we least expect it.[55] As we have noted earlier, it is supposed to leave no room for doubt.

> The intuition of the Absolute resembles perception rather than conception. It is as inevitable, as direct, as absolute as perception. It forces itself irresistibly on our consciousness. There can be no scope for doubt, hesitation, option 'this or that' in this act of realization. Reality as soon as it rises into view carries its conviction about itself; it lays hold upon our nature with absolute violence. It is objective certainty we attain and not subjective assurance, or rather it is absolute certitude, and neither subjective nor objective assurance which we get.56

Most of the writers we have considered equate anubhava with the Yoga experience of nirvikalpa samādhi, the state in which the mind transcends its usual divisions of Knower, knowledge and process of knowing and becomes free from all mental content.

In view of the general tendency to assign epistemological supremacy to anubhava in relation to śruti, the common designation of Advaita as mysticism is not surprising, and any consideration of the role of these two factors in Shankara must take note of and evaluate this proclivity. One of the earliest writers to so treat Advaita was S.N. Dasgupta.[57] In his work, brahman is considered as identical with the experience, and the latter is referred to as reality. Intuitive experience is the immediate means of Self-knowledge and is his key concept.

> Only persons who have realized this truth can point this out to us as an experience which is at once self-illuminating and blissful and which is entirely

> different from all else that is known to us. Once it is thus exhibited, those who have the highest moral elevation and disinclination to worldly enjoyments can grasp it by an inner intuitive contact with the reality itself (adhyatmayoga). This truth is indeed the culmination of all the teaching of the Vedas.58

Dasgupta's definition of mysticism as, "the belief that God is realized through ecstatic communion with Him", is obviously inadequate to deal with the diversity of the material he subsumes under the category.[59] But then, Dasgupta shows little sensitivity to variation. The method of Yoga is seen by him as supplying the definite technique lacking in the Upanishads, for the perception of the truths discussed there. There is little regard for divergent theological presuppositions, and Dasgupta's unhesitant recourse to Yoga is significant.

> In the most advanced state of this yoga intuition, all the truths regarding the nature of the true Self, of the mind and of the material world and its connection with the mind, become clear, and as a result of this and also as a result of the gradual weakening of the constitution of the mind, the latter ceases to live and work and is disassociated forever from the spirit or the Self.60

R.C. Zaehner, in his works on mysticism, also treats Shankara's Advaita primarily as an experience.[61] More recently Parrinder has done the same.[62] Parrinder does not proffer any definition of his own, but for him, the crucial terms are experiment and experience. Two definitions he does quote are, "reliance on spiritual intuition or exalted feeling as a means of acquiring knowledge of mysteries inaccessible to intellectual apprehension", and, "belief in the possibility of union with the Divine nature by means of ecstatic contemplation".[63]

It is interesting that Parrinder confesses the difficulty of finding an Indian term to correspond to the European word, mysticism, in the sense of union, and more interesting that he selects the term yoga.

Although Parrinder expresses no misgivings about his label of mysticism on Advaita, two significant passages in his work suggest the difficulties of this assumption. These, however, do not direct him to any re-evaluation. In the first of these, he writes about the Upanishads,

> A few other examples of word-renunciation are given but it is remarkable that the Upanishads, which are often regarded as mystical treatises, have very few autobiographical details, and the experiences upon which they seem to be founded have to be deduced from their teachings. There is a search for mystical unity, but it is expressed in a dogmatic statement rather than in described experience.64

After describing Shankara's mysticism as cool and unimpassioned, characterized by argument and assertion than by autobiography, he writes in the second passage,

> The proof of the existence of the divine being is in the human self and this is established by asserting the identity of divine and self. This dogmatic declaration results from reflection and intuition, but it is strongly supported by appeals to the authority of scripture, the Vedas and Upanishads. In this Shankara reveals himself as a theologian rather than a logical philosopher.65

These two passages, suggesting perhaps Parrinder's own unconfessed doubts, reveal also the difficulty of many of the other writers on mysticism. Advaita Vedānta is treated as mystical without any satisfactory definition of the latter. Mysticism seems to be an alternative heading, attractive

perhaps, for the discussion of doctrinal matters.[66]

It seems therefore, that there is a certain consensus in current opinion about the respective roles of śruti and anubhava in Shankara. The primacy of experience and intuition over śruti is, in fact, considered to be a unique characteristic of Indian philosophy in general, which places it in a distinctively superior category from Western philosophy. Many of the conclusions we have isolated have achieved an apriori status over the years and greatly influenced the study of and approach to Shankara and to Indian religious thought. It is our contention, however, that these views gravely misrepresent Shankara's position, and we aim to argue for radically different conclusions about the status and functions of śruti and anubhava. We can now summarize the chief features of the relationship between śruti and anubhava, as formulated in the studies we have examined:

1. The Vedas are the records of the transcendental experiences of the ancient mystics, through which they conclusively apprehended the exact nature of reality. Śruti is the linguistic record of anubhava.
2. The Vedas derive their authority from the self-certifying nature of religious experience. Religious experience, being intrinsically valid and authoritative, lends this character to the texts recording them.
3. For the aspirant, the declarations of the Vedas are only provisional. They are subject to the confirmation of direct experience, which is in the last resort the final criterion of truth and the ultimate satisfactory proof. As records of mystical experiences, the Vedas

merely indicate what can be known. They are primarily useful to the lesser qualified aspirant who is incapable of anubhava.

4. The Vedas contain truths which man could, by the exercise of his faculties, rediscover and verify.
5. The Vedas are by no means unique as a source of knowledge about brahman.
6. Knowledge of brahman (brahmajñāna) is gained through the three-fold process of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana. The first two are viewed as merely preliminary and intellectual. It is only the experience which deep meditation (nididhyāsana) affords that conclusively informs us about brahman.
7. Anubhava is accorded the status of an independent means of knowledge (pramāna). It is the basis on which all knowledge of the supersensuous rests, the equivalent, in the spiritual context, of direct perception (pratyaksha) in the empirical world.

CHAPTER 2

THE ASCERTAINMENT AND SOURCES OF VALID KNOWLEDGE

Orthodox and heterodox systems of Indian philosophy demonstrate a great concern of thought about the nature, validity and sources of knowledge. It was considered important for each school of thought to elucidate the authoritative basis of its postulates, and the character of debate was shaped by a clear comprehension of each other's standpoint. The code of disputation did not allow attempts to refute opposing arguments by reference to an authoritative source of knowledge which was not mutually acceptable. This principle is clearly evident throughout Shankara's commentaries, where the kind of argument employed and the authority specified depend on the epistemology of the opponent. The authority of the Vedas, for example, is not generally resorted to in contention with Buddhist schools of thought. The growth and refinement of sophisticated theories of knowledge were undoubtedly quickened by the birth of heterodox systems like Jainism and Buddhism, which rejected the authority of the Vedas and claimed to found their propositions exclusively on reason.

Shankara, in his commentaries, does not undertake any independent systematic analysis of the sources of knowledge.

He treats them throughout as being well known.[1] Nevertheless, it is a great error to assume that he was indifferent to problems of epistemology. His commentaries clearly belie any such conclusion. There may be a number of reasons for the absence of any independent systematic treatment of this subject in his works. Firstly, he saw his role primarily as a commentator on the Upanishads and the kind of discussion he developed was largely dictated by the content of any particular verse before him. Secondly, the absence could be accounted for by his agreement with the exponents of rival systems. One gets the impression that Shankara's concern was not with the elaboration of a theory about the sources of knowledge, but with the evaluation of their respective worth. It is a concern which arises directly out of his desire to uphold the authoritative source for our knowledge of brahman.

2.1 The Nature and Criterion of Valid Knowledge

Technically speaking, the Sanskrit word jñāna refers to all kinds of cognitions, without regard to the question of truth or error. To know, in this sense of the term, is simply to have a notion, doubt, desire, feeling, dream or incorrect idea. In this strict sense therefore, its opposite, ajñāna, indicates the complete absence of any cognition. This latter term, however, is rarely used with this absolute denotation. The word pramā is reserved only to designate a true cognition. Generally, however, jñāna is equated with pramā and ajñāna with apramā or invalid cognition, which includes the total absence of knowledge,

doubt, error or wrong notion.

The special source of a particular pramā or knowledge is termed, pramāṇa. It is defined as the cause (kāraṇa) of valid knowledge (pramā kāraṇam pramāṇam).[2] A kāraṇa is conceived as, "the unique or special cause through the action of which a particular effect is produced".[3] In the case of external perceptual knowledge, for instance, the causes are many. There is the particular sense organ as well as the mind. The mind, however, is common to all kinds of perception and so cannot be regarded as the unique cause. In external perception, it is the particular sense organ which is considered as the kāraṇa. In addition to being unique, a kāraṇa should also possess an active function. The contact between the sense organ and the sense object is unique because it is a feature of perception alone. It is not, however, considered as the kāraṇa of perception because it is itself a function of the sense organ. A pramāṇa then, can be defined as, "an active and unique cause (karana) of a prama or knowledge".[4] Its special feature is its capacity to produce valid knowledge. On this characteristic, Shankara is clear.

> A means of knowledge is or is not such according as it leads or does not lead to valid knowledge. Otherwise even a post, for instance, would be considered a means of knowledge in perceiving sound etc.5

The reverse of this proposition is also true for Shankara.

Knowledge is only generated by a valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa).[6]

The function of knowledge, according to Shankara, is to

reveal the nature of things and valid knowledge conforms to the nature of the object it seeks to reveal. Any object must be known as it is and thus knowledge is not governed by human choice but by the character of the object to be known.

> But a thing cannot be judged diversely to be of such a kind and not to be of such a kind, to be existent and non-existent (simultaneously). Options depend on human notions, whereas valid knowledge of the true nature of a thing is not dependent on human notions. On what does it depend then? It is dependent on the thing itself. For an awareness of the form, 'This is a stump, or a man, or something else', with regard to the same stump cannot be valid knowledge. In such a case the awareness of the form, 'This is a man or something else' is erroneous, but 'This is a stump to be sure' is valid knowledge; for it corresponds to the thing itself. Thus the validity of knowledge of an existing thing is determined by the thing itself.7

Dharmarāja, in Vēdanta Paribhāṣā, defines pramā as,

"that knowledge which has for its object something that is not already known and is uncontradicted".[8] Here novelty (anadhigatatva) and non-contradictedness (abādhitatva) are considered the crucial characteristics of pramā. Non-contradictedness, as far as Advaita is concerned, is the crucial test of truth. All other tests are seen as conforming to this. Any invalid proposition or erroneous experience, such as the cognition of a rope as a snake, can be refuted on the ground of being contradicted. In this case, the object of knowledge, the snake, is contradicted by the knowledge of the rope. The principle of non-contradictedness implies that knowledge, the purpose of which is to reveal reality, is held to be valid until it is falsified by a superior pramāna. The objection may be forwarded that since Advaita posits brahman as the ultimate reality, it is impossible to speak of a valid knowledge of ordinary

objects. This contention is anticipated by Dharmaraja, who qualifies "uncontradicted" in his definition to mean, "Not contradicted during the transmigratory state".[9] In the absolute sense, of course, brahman alone is uncontradicted and the notion of reality ascribed to the world of diversity is held to be valid until brahman is known.[10]

There is no doubt that Shankara sees the operation of the pramāṇas, secular and sacred, as being founded on ignorance (avidyā). What is not often emphasized is the distinctive manner of the relationship between avidyā and the pramāṇas. It is not, as it is sometimes understood, that the pramāṇas are incapable of producing right knowledge, empirical and absolute. It is the generally implicit and assumed identification between the Self and non-Self in the operation of the pramāṇas that reveals their location in avidyā. The working of the pramāṇas proceeds from the natural superimposition (adhyāsa) of the nature of the Self on the non-Self and vice-versa.

> Since a man without self-identification with the body, mind, senses, etc., cannot become a cognizer, and as such, the means of knowledge cannot function for him; since perception and other activities (of a man) are not possible without accepting the senses etc. (as his own); since the senses cannot function without (the body as) a basis; since nobody engages in any activity with a body that has not the idea of the Self superimposed on it; since the unrelated Self cannot become a cognizer unless there are all these (mutual superimposition of the Self and the body and their attributes on each other); and since the means of knowledge cannot function unless there is a cognizership; therefore it follows that the means of knowledge, such as direct perception as well as the scriptures, must have a man as their locus who is subject to nescience.11

The ultimate refutation of the presupposed superimposition upon which the function of any pramāṇa is generally based,

does not diminish its function in the production of valid knowledge.[12] Shankara does not propose any alternative avenue to knowledge, empirical and spiritual, besides the legitimate pramāṇas. He does not anywhere express doubts or reservations about the competence of the pramāṇas to produce valid knowledge in their respective spheres. He claims, in fact, that practical affairs will become impossible if the pramāṇas are regarded as fundamentally perverse. Defending inference, for example, as a means of knowledge, Shankara writes,

> If you challenge the validity of an inference of the kind not based on a causal relation, all our activities, including eating and drinking, would be impossible, which you certainly do not desire. We see in life that people who have experienced that hunger and thirst, for instance, are appeased by eating and drinking, proceed to adopt these means, expecting similar results; all this would be impossible. As a matter of fact, however, people who have the experience of eating and drinking infer, on the ground of similarity, that their hunger and thirst would be appeased if they ate and drank again, and proceed to act accordingly.13

Another of Shankara's compelling arguments for the indispensability of the pramāṇas occurs in one of his many discussions with the various Buddhist schools. Here the controversy is with the Vijñānavāda proponent, arguing for the non-existence of external objects, and the validity of ideas alone which appear as different external objects.

> Buddhist: Since no object can possibly exist externally, I come to the conclusion that it appears as though it is outside.
>
> Vedantin: This conclusion is not honest, since the possibility or impossibility of the existence of a thing is determined in accordance with the applicability or non-applicability of the means of knowledge to it, but the applicability or non-applicability of the means of knowledge is not ascertained in accordance with the possibility or impossibility (of the thing). What is

known through anyone of the means of knowledge, such as direct perception etc., is possible, and what cannot be known through any one of these means of knowledge is impossible. In the case under discussion, the external things are known individually by the respective means of knowledge; so how can they be declared to be impossible by raising such alternatives as different, non-different etc.?14

The second characteristic of valid knowledge, as mentioned above, is novelty (anadhigatatva). The question of novelty as a feature of pramā revolves around the acceptance of memory as a distinct pramāṇa. Vedantists, however, on the whole, seem uninterested in this controversy. The Vedānta-Paribhāṣā offers a definition of pramā to exclude and include memory. Generally speaking, it is excluded from valid knowledge because it is not produced by any one of the accepted pramāṇas, but originates from the impressions of a past cognition. This does not imply that memory (smṛiti) is invalid. It is true if it arises out of the impressions of a valid cognition and false if it does not. In other words, it is the original or archetypal cognition that is paramount.

2.2. The Self-validity of Knowledge (Svataḥ-Prāmāṇya-Vāda)

The self-validity of knowledge is a very important, but little discussed, area of Advaita thought. It is one of the many epistemological theories taken from the Pūrva-Mīmānsā by Advaita and its understanding is vital in apprehending

the independent and definitive role of each pramana in giving rise to valid knowledge. Svatah-prāmāṇya, may be translated as the self-validity or intrinsic validity of knowledge. The theory itself involves a dual proposition:

1. The validity of knowledge is intrinsic (svatah-siddha).
2. The validity of knowledge is self-evident (svatah-prakāśa).[15]

We can now consider each proposition in turn.

1. The validity of knowledge is intrinsic: This implies that the validity of knowledge arises from the totality of the very causes that produce a particular knowledge and not from factors extraneous to those causes. If all the conditions necessary for the successful operation of any one of the pramāṇas are fulfilled, valid knowledge will result. The important point is that the source of knowledge should be free from deficiencies. The necessary conditions required for the production of any knowledge will, of course, vary with the pramāṇas. In the case of the perception of forms, for example, the conditions will include a healthy organ of vision and sufficient light. When knowledge is discovered to be invalid, this invalidity cannot be attributed to the causal factors themselves, but to some adventitious defects (dosha) in them. Thus Pūrva-Mīmāṇsā and Advaita claim that while validity is intrinsic, invalidity is extrinsic.[16]

On the question of the validity of knowledge, the Advaita view is best contrasted with the arguments of the Nyāya school. The contention between both schools on this matter has become one of the classic controversies in the history of Indian

philosophical thought. Both schools are in agreement as far as the invalidity of knowledge is concerned, regarding it as due to extraneous factors. They disagree, however, about the cause of validity. Nyāya proposes the theory of the extrinsic validity of knowledge (paratah-prāmānya-vāda). Against the Advaita argument that validity is intrinsic in terms of origin and apprehension, Nyāya contends that it is extrinsic in both cases. The Nyāya argument is that if invalidity (apramā) is due to defects (dosha) existing along with the common causes of knowledge, then pramā must be due to the presence of some favourable factor (guna) along with the common causes. Hence, knowledge is not self-valid, but its validity and invalidity are derived from extraneous causes. This argument is refuted by Advaita on the ground that the favourable factor of Nyāya is not independent of the causes themselves.[17] Valid knowledge can be accounted for by the absence of defect and contradiction, and the excellence of the causes of knowledge (guna) is not an extraneous factor, but an intrinsic condition for the rise of pramā.

2. The validity of knowledge is self-evident: Here the proposition is that the validity of knowledge is spontaneously apprehended along with the apprehension of knowledge itself. The same conditions which produce knowledge and its validity also give rise to belief in that validity. Knowledge arises when the necessary conditions which give rise to it, such as absence of defect and contradiction, are present, and along with it there is a belief in its validity. Both do not owe their rise to any external conditions and require no

verification from anything else.[18]

The paratah-prāmāṇya-vāda of Nyāya advocates the extrinsic apprehension of validity. The Nyāya position is that the issue of validity or invalidity is relevant only after the origination of knowledge. Initially, knowledge is neither valid nor invalid. Valid knowledge corresponds with its object, and this correspondence can be put to the test in fruitful activity. One infers from the capacity or incapacity of knowledge to produce successful activity, its validity or invalidity. A mirage in a desert, for example, is an optical illusion because of its failure to quench the thirst of a traveller.[19]

Advaitins generally respond in a twofold manner to the Nyāya objections. In the first case, it is argued that a false cognition may, and sometimes does, lead to successful activity. The lustre of a distant jewel may be mistaken for the jewel itself, but can lead the one who desires it to successfully obtain it.[20]

The stronger argument urged against the Nyāya position is that it leads to infinite regress. If the validity of one cognition is to depend on another cognition, then the second will require a third and so on. This is the import of Shankara's statement that the validity of the Upanishads does not depend on another means of knowledge like inference.[21] Knowledge produced by a defect-free pramāṇa is apprehended as valid, unless contradicted by the knowledge of a higher reality.[22]

Except Nyāya-Vaiśeshika, all other orthodox Vedic systems (two schools of Pūrva-Mīmānsā, Sāmkhya-Yoga and Vedānta) advocate the self-validity of knowledge. We have seen that whereas Advaita asserts the intrinsic validity of knowledge in terms of its origin and ascertainment against the Nyāya view of extrinsic validity, it agrees with the latter on extrinsic invalidity in both cases. The invalidity of knowledge is not apprehended along with the apprehension of knowledge. It is determined by inference from a defect in the instrument of knowledge or from a subsequent cognition which refutes the earlier one. If a post is mistaken for a man, the knowledge of the post is negated by the apprehension of the man. The self-validity of knowledge does not preclude the possibility of doubt about the truth of any particular cognition. Properly speaking, however, if one entertains doubt about the truth of a cognition, there is no cognition. It involves a vacillation between two notions and can sometimes be removed by repeating the same cognition after removing the cause of doubt.

The importance of the self-validity argument for Advaita is that any defect-free pramāna can independently generate knowledge. The knowledge produced by any pramāna does not have to be authenticated by another. On the evidence of the sense of taste alone, for example, the sweetness of sugar is indubitably accepted. It follows from this that the Vedas also, as a means of knowledge in the form of words (śabda-pramāna) can generate valid knowledge independently of other means. The knowledge is not necessarily of a provisional

nature, awaiting confirmation. We can anticipate here a clear difference of view with those who propose the necessity for anubhava as a kind of certifying experience for the hypothetical propositions of the Vedas.

2.3 The Self-luminosity of Knowledge (Svataḥ-Prakāśa-Vāda)

Like the idea of self-validity discussed above, the concept of self-luminosity is an essential epistemological theory of Advaita. They are the premises for understanding the knowledge process in this system. The idea may be summed up by saying that whenever there is knowledge of an object, the fact of this knowledge is immediately known. According to Advaita, material things which are all inert are not revealed except by cognitions of them. A cognition, however, is revealed as soon as it arises, needing no other cognition for its revelation. Knowledge of a tree, for example, is dependent on its objectification by the cognition, "This is a tree". This cognition, however, is immediately apprehended. One is immediately aware of one's knowledge of the tree.

In Advaita, self-luminosity belongs to the ātman alone. In Its light everything is illumined and known. The Self is the Knower (kshetrajña) and everything else is known (kshetra).[23] As the unchanging Witness of all mental

modifications, It is referred to as sākshi.[24] The same Awareness, reflected in the mind and identified with it, becomes the jīva, who functions as the perceiver (pramātā). The cognizer, the object cognized (prameya) and the cognition (pramiti) are all revealed by the Self as Witness (sākshi). In any act of perception, the cognitive mode objectifies and reveals the object because it is illumined by the Self. This cognition, however, does not require another cognitive mode for its manifestation. It is revealed directly by the Self as sākshi, as soon as it originates.

On the question of the self-luminosity of knowledge, Advaita is at issue with the Bhātta school of Pūrva-Mīmānsā who advocate the theory of paratah-prakāśa-vāda, according to which any knowledge is not self-revealed, but dependent for its revelation upon another knowledge.[25] The Mīmānsā argues that cognitions, being formless, cannot be directly apprehended, but can be inferred. When a tree, for example, is known, it acquires the quality of "knownness" which is perceptible. By perceiving this mark of "knownness", one infers one's prior knowledge of the tree. Thus, while an object may be directly apprehended, its knowledge is gained only indirectly by an inferential process of reasoning. This Mīmānsā argument is unmistakably refuted by Shankara.

> Those who hold that cognition (jnana) is formless and is not known by immediate perception must admit that, since an object of knowledge is apprehended through cognition, cognition is quite as immediately known as pleasure or the like.
>
> Moreover, it cannot be maintained that cognition is a thing which one seeks to know. If cognition were unknown, it would be a thing which has to be sought after just as an object of cognition is sought after. Just as, for example, a man seeks to reach by cognition the cognizable

> object such as a pot, so also would he have to seek to reach cognition by means of another cognition. But the fact is otherwise. Wherefore cognition is self-revealed, and therefore, also, is the cognizer self-revealed.26

His second argument is the same as that used in refuting the paratah-prāmānya theory. If one cognition needs another for its revelation, the second will need a third and the result will be infinite regression.[27]

The undoubted motivation behind Advaita's powerful advocacy of the theories of the self-validity and self-luminosity of knowledge is the necessity for incontrovertibly establishing the possibility of valid knowledge. This possibility is imperative in any outlook, like Advaita, where ultimate human freedom (moksha) lies in the gain of valid knowledge. Alternative theories are seen as leading to infinitive regression, making knowledge and freedom an impossibility. The very definition of a pramāna implies, as we have seen, the capacity to produce valid knowledge.

Before embarking on an analysis of Shankara's justification of the Vedas as a source of valid knowledge, it is necessary to outline the Advaita view of the nature and operation of the other five pramānas. It is only in the light of our understanding of the mechanism of these sources, the kind of knowledge apprehended through each one and their limitations, that we can properly see the centrality and indispensability of the Vedas as a pramāna for Shankara. Each pramāna has a unique way of transmitting knowledge and each one presents a distinct type.[28]

There is no unanimity among the schools of Indian philosophy about the nature and number of these sources of knowledge. The Cārvākas only admit sense perception as a valid means of knowledge. The schools of Buddhism and Vaiśeshika acknowledge perception and inference. The Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems go further in recognizing perception, inference and śabda. To these three, the Naiyāyikas add comparison as a source. Nyāya has contributed immensely to the development of inference as a pramāṇa, upon which, as we have seen, every other source of knowledge depends for its validation. The Prabhākara school of Pūrva-Mīmānsā goes beyond Nyāya and adds postulation as a source of knowledge. The process comes to an end with the Bhaṭṭa school of Mīmānsā and Advaita who include non-apprehension as the sixth pramāṇa.

2.4 The Six Pramāṇas

(I). Perception (Pratyaksha)

The term pratyaksha is a compound of praty and aksha (before the eye). Used as an adjective, it indicates that which is direct and immediate. As a noun, it signifies immediate knowledge. Pratyaksha principally designates knowledge produced from the direct contact of the external senses with their objects. Advaita, however, accepts the validity of internal perception where mental states such as

love, hate, anger and desire are directly known by the atman without the instrumentality of the sense organs and the mind.[29] In the view of Advaita, mental states are apprehended as soon as they arise, and the mind is not conceived of as the organ of internal perception (antarindriya).

> It cannot be urged that if the mind thus be not an organ, the perception of happiness etc., will not be immediate (saksat); because the immediacy of knowledge does not lie in its being due to an organ; for in that case inference etc., also, being due to the mind, would be immediate, and God's knowledge, which is not due to any organ, would not be immediate.30

The five external senses comprise the special cause (asadhārāṇam kāraṇam) of perception. The Advaita understanding of the nature of the sense organs differs from that of other Indian systems, particularly the Buddhists and the Mīmānsā. The former conceives the sense organs (indriyas) as the golokas or sense-orifices, while the latter sees them as the capacities (śakti) of the physiological organs. According to Advaita, the actual organs of perception are not the outer organs located in the physical body. The real sense organs are their subtle counterparts located in the subtle body (sūkshma śarira) and composed of the five elements before they have undergone the process of grossification (pañcīkarana).[31] Prior to this stage, the elements space, air, fire, water and earth exist in a pure subtle form, characterized by the qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. Out of the subtle sattva aspect of space (ākāśa) is evolved the organ of hearing, the ear. The organ of touch, the skin, envolves out of the sattva aspect of air (vāyu), the organs of sight from the sattva aspect of fire (agni), the organ of taste, the tongue, from

the sattva aspect of water (āpaḥ), and from the sattva aspect of earth is evolved the organ of smell. From the total sattva aspect of these five elements emerges the antaḥkaraṇa (internal organ) constituted of the manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), ahaṃkāra (ego) and citta (memory).[32] It is the fivefold nature of the elements which necessitates the fivefoldness of the indriyas and it is the special relationship which each sense organ enjoys with a particular element that enables it to perceive its respective object.

> The organs are but modes of the objects in order to perceive them, as a lamp, which is but a mode of colour, is an instrument for revealing all colours. Similarly, the organs are but modes of all particular objects in order to perceive them, as is the case with the lamp.33

Shankara goes to great lengths to justify the existence of the internal organ (antaḥkaraṇa). He argues inductively for its reality.

> For it is a well known fact that even when there is a connection between the external organ, the object and the self, a man does not perceive that object which may be just in front, and when asked, 'Have you seen this form?' he says, 'My mind was elsewhere - I was absent-minded, I did not see it'. Similarly when asked, 'Have you heard what I have said'? he says, 'I was absent-minded, I did not hear it'. Therefore it is understood that something else, viz., the internal organ called the mind, which joins itself to the objects of all the organs, exists, in the absence of which the eye and other organs fail to perceive their respective objects such as form and sound, although they have the capacity to do so, and in the presence of which they succeed in it. Hence it is through the mind that everybody sees and hears, for vision and the like are impossible when the mind is engaged.34

The existence of the antaḥkaraṇa is also apparent as the faculty which receives, discriminates and interprets sense data. Because, "even if one is touched by anybody from behind invisibly, one knows it distinctly that this is a touch of the hand, or that this is a touch of the knee;

therefore the internal organ called mind exists. If there is no mind to distinguish them, how can the skin alone do this? That which helps us to distinguish between perceptions is the mind".[35]

In addition to these two arguments, Shankara also proposes the possibility that the non-existence of the antahkarana would result in either perpetual perception or perpetual non-perception. The former will result whenever there is a conjunction of the ātman, the sense organs and their respective objects, since these will comprise the sufficient instruments of perception. Alternatively, if in the presence of all three factors perception did not occur, there will be the possibility of constant non-perception. Since neither of these two alternatives obtains, one must acknowledge the presence of an internal organ, "through the alertness of which perception occurs, and through the want of alertness of which it does not occur".[36]

In any act of external perception therefore, there are four factors present, the absence of any one of which makes it impossible. These are the ātman, the antahkarana, the sense organ and the object. Of these four elements, the ātman alone is immanently luminous, being of the nature of Consciousness. In any act of knowing, the object is revealed by the ātman, which is conjoined to the former through the mind conjoined with the sense organ.[37] Advaita contends that sensible knowledge results from the contact of the sense organs with their appropriate objects. Because it conceives the sense organs as composed of subtle substances,

Advaita finds no difficulty in claiming that these organs actually reach out to their objects.[38] In reaching out to the objects, the organs are accompanied by the mind which is also composed of the same subtle substances. The mind assumes a modification (vritti) which corresponds to the object and which is illumined by the ātman as Awareness. The result of this entire process is perception.

Through perception, we are able to know the object itself, its qualities, genus and individual differences. These are perceived as attributes of substances and identical with them. Shankara rejects the Nyāya category of inherence (samavāya) which is posited as an independent factor holding the distinct elements of substance and attribute together. Like the relation between the universal and the particular, the relation between substance and attribute is one of identity. They may be distinguishable in thought, but not in fact. The argument for inherence as an independent category leads to infinite regress.[39]

Besides its classification of perceptual knowledge as internal and external, Advaita also recognizes the categories of determinate (savikalpa) and indeterminate (nirvikalpa) perception.[40] Generally, perception is of the determinate type, which grasps the relatedness of substantive and qualifying attribute. The knowledge, "This is a jar", for example, is determinate because it apprehends the jar and its generic quality "jarness" as related to each other. Indeterminate perception, however, does not apprehend the relatedness of substantive and its attribute. The sentence,

"This is that Devadatta", is indeterminate because it points out Devadatta as being divested of qualifying attributes "this" and "that". The mahāvākya (great sentence) "tat tvam asi" is also a sentence of the latter type. Indeterminate perception is less common than determinate.[41]

In the presence of defect-free causal conditions, pratyaksha produces immediate valid knowledge. Invalidity, as we have seen, is the result of extraneous conditions such as a diseased sense organ or an insufficient medium of light etc. Except in such instances, perception is unchallengeable in its own field, even by the Vedas.

> If you deny an observed fact, saying it is impossible, you would be contradicting experience, a thing which nobody will allow. Nor is there any question of impossibility with regard to an observed fact, because it has actually been observed.42

Shankara often rejects an opponent's position if he can point to its disparity with perception.

(II). Inference (Anumāna)

The Sanskrit term for inference is anumāna, which literally means "knowing after". The knowledge arrived at by the application of this method is referred to as anumiti (consequent knowledge), from anu (after) and miti (knowledge). It indicates therefore, knowledge that is gained from an anterior knowledge. Anumiti is the knowledge that is reasoned from the knowledge of an invariable concomitance between what is perceived and what is deduced.[43] The Sanskrit

term for this uniform relation is vyāpti (extension or pervasion). This universal concurrence of the major term and the minor term in all the loci where the latter is present is held by both Advaita and Nyāya to be the core of anumāna as a pramāṇa.[44]

Advaita maintains that vyāpti is discerned when it is established by all known cases and when no negative one has been observed. The actual number of observed cases is not important and vyāpti could be detected from one known instance. Repetition is necessary only when there is cause for doubt.[45] The Advaita basis therefore, for determination of vyāpti is positive invariable concomitance or agreement in presence (anvaya), and non-observation of any exception. The standard example of anumāna, where there is smoke, there is fire, illustrates positive invariable concomitance. On this point there is a difference of opinion with Nyāya who insist also on negative invariable concomitance (vyatireka) or agreement in absence (where there is no fire, there is no smoke) as a requirement of vyāpti.[46] As a consequence of this view, the main fallacy of a syllogism is the contradiction of perception and Shankara constantly refutes arguments on this basis.

> When a thing is directly recognized as identical, it is improper to infer that it is something else, for when an inference contradicts perception, the ground of such an inference becomes fallacious.47

This brings us to a consideration of the syllogistic form which is employed by Advaita, and here a comparison with Nyāya is advantageous. The terms in Indian logic which correspond to the major, minor and middle terms of

the Western syllogism are sādhya, paksha and hetu. In the standard example, fire, the object to be inferred, is the sādhya. The hill, that in which the thing is inferred, is the paksha, and smoke, the ground of the inference, is the hetu (reason). The hetu is commonly referred to as the sādhana (means of inference) or liṅga (mark, sign). The Nyaya form of anumāna comprises five distinct propositions or stages. These are as follows:

1. Pratijñā - (the proposition to be established) - There is fire on the hill.
2. Hetu - (reason) - because there is smoke.
3. Udāharaṇa (universal proposition supported by example) - Whenever there is smoke there is fire, as in the kitchen.
4. Upanaya (application) - The hill has smoke such as is always accompanied by fire.
5. Nigamana (conclusion) - Therefore there is fire on the hill.

According to Advaita, however, the first three or the last three steps of the syllogism are adequate. Advaita distinguishes between an anumāna meant for oneself (svārthānumanā) and one intended for convincing another person (parārthānumāna). It is the latter which requires the formal syllogistic form and this can be constituted of the first three or last three members of the fivefold Nyāya procedure.[48]

The necessity of an observed example as an essential part of any anumāna points to one of its inherent features. Anumāna, basically speaking, is deductive reasoning since

its operation consists in the application of a universal proposition to a particular case. But the support of the universal proposition by at least one example taken from actual experience, bestows upon it an inductive feature. Knowledge of vyāpti is acquired by observation and generalization. Anumāna therefore, is a combined inductive - deductive process of reasoning.

Inference, dependent as it is on perception for the data of its propositions, is subject to the limitations of being able to deal only with the material that is the proper sphere of perception. They are both, by definition, debarred from authoritativeness with regards to any matter transcending sense apperception. This does not presume, however, that Shankara finds no utility for anumāna in his exegesis of the Vedas. The task which he apportions to this source of knowledge in relation to śabda-pramāṇa will be considered later.

(III). Comparison (Upamāna)

Upamāna, as an independent source of knowledge, is accepted by Mīmānsā, Nyāya and Advaita. It is defined as, "the instrument of the valid knowledge of similarity".[49] The standard example of upamāna is provided by the Vedānta-Paribhāsā. Similarity may be known by perception, as in the case of one who, having seen his cow at home, goes into the

woods and sees a wild cow (gavaya) which resembles his own cow. From this experience, however, he gains the additional knowledge that his cow at home is like the gavaya. Upamāna is the means by which the judgement of the cow's similarity to the gavaya is formed from the perception of the gavaya's resemblance to his cow. This resulting knowledge is called upamiti. Advaita denies that upamāna is a case of perception, because the cow is not immediately present before one's eyes. Upamāna is also differentiated from anumāna. In Indian logic, inference is always syllogistic and the major premise of a comparative judgement would be formulated as follows: "When A is like B, B is also like A". Such a premise would beg the question. To the argument that upamāna is a combination of perception and memory, the Advaitin will accept that the elements of comparison may be so derived, the cow through memory and the gavaya through perception, but this leaves the question of their integration unanswered. The same objection, moreover, can be raised about inference. Dharmarāja adduces the further evidence that in upamāna one has the apperception, "I am comparing [not inferring] the two things".[50] Advaita finds it impossible to explain comparative judgements through any of the other pramānas and Shankara includes upamāna in his detailing of the valid sources of knowledge.

(IV). Postulation (Arthāpatti)

The term arthāpatti is a compound of artha (fact) and

āpatti (obtaining). It indicates the assumption of an unperceived or unknown fact in order to explain two facts which are known but contradictory.[51] The standard example is that of a man who fasts during the day but manages to remain fat. These two incompatible facts are reconciled by postulating that he must be eating during the night. Another typical example is that of a person who is alive and not at home. One can assume that he must be somewhere outside, for the fact of being alive and not at home cannot be otherwise explained. It is obvious from these two illustrations that arthāpatti is appropriate where there is only one alternative possible. If the options are many, the assumption of one will not irrefutably resolve the paradox. Arthāpatti does not, like a hypothesis, offer a tentative supposition that awaits verification. It arises out of a need for explanation and is intended to carry absolute certainty as the only possible solution. One cannot, for example, postulate the origin of the world in an omnipotent and omnipresent Creator, because of the conceivability of alternative explanations. The universe might have come into being from the concerted action of several gods.

Arthāpatti is classified by Advaita as being of two types:

1. postulation from what is seen (dṛishṭārthāpatti);
2. postulation from what is heard (śrutārthāpatti).

Our example of the stout man who fasts during the day illustrates the first type. Presumption of the second type occurs where, "on account of the incongruity of the direct meaning of a sentence that is being heard, one assumes a

different meaning for it".[52] For instance, as a result of the śruti statement, "The knower of the Self transcends grief",[53] one postulates that the manifold bonds signified by the word grief must be false, for they cannot otherwise be destroyed by knowledge. Śrutārthāpatti is further divided into two kinds;

1. that due to incompleteness of verbal expression (abhidhānānupapatti);
2. that due to incompleteness of meaning (abhihitānupapatti).[54]

The first occurs where one hears only part of a sentence and assumes an additional word or words consistent with the context and intention of the speaker. To the words "open" or "close", one often supplements "the door". As an example of the second kind of śrutārthāpatti, Dharmarāja gives the Vedic text, "One who desires heaven should perform the jyotishtoma sacrifice".[55] This statement prompts a doubt about the possibility of a time bound ritual creating a remote future result. This doubt is resolved by the assumption of an unseen result (apūrva) which endures and leads to the attainment of heaven.

Advaitins resist any attempt to reduce arthāpatti to a kind of inference. It is argued that any attempt to do so involves begging the question, for the major premise of the syllogism will assume the fact which it is the aim of the inferential argument to prove. A formulation of the standard example in a syllogistic structure will read as follows:

Devadatta who is stout must eat by day or by night.

Devadatta does not eat by day.

Therefore, he eats by night.

Advaita will argue that it is through arthāpatti that one arrives at the conclusion of the major premise.[56] Dharmarāja also adds that in arthāpatti, one has the apperception of "assuming" and not "inferring".[57]

Śrutārthāpatti is specifically mentioned by Shankara at many points in his commentaries and he uses it as a principle of exegesis.[58] Dṛishṭārthāpatti finds less use in him because, as we shall see, he relies on śabda-pramāṇa as a reliable source for unperceived facts.

(V). Non-cognition (Anupalabdhi)

The Bhāṭṭa school of Pūrva-Mīmānsā and Advaita Vedānta accept non-cognition as an independent pramāṇa. According to both schools, the absence of an object or its attributes from any locus is apprehended by its non-perception.[59] The absence of a table from its accustomed position in a room is not known by cognition of its non-existence, for the organ of vision has no contact with non-existence, but by the non-cognition of its presence.[60]

Indirect knowledge of non-existence can be attained by other means. One can infer, for instance, the absence of a person at his residence from his presence at his place of work. Direct knowledge, however, of the

non-existence of perceptible objects and their attributes is available only through anupalabdhi. It is considered to be independent because it does not involve any of the processes occurring in anumāna, upamāna, arthāpatti or śabda. The attempt to reduce anupalabdhi to an inference will result, Advaita claims, in a begging of the question. The major premise of such an inference, "what is not perceived in a place does not exist there", assumes the very conclusion which is intended to be proved. Moreover, there is still the question of how one arrives at the general proposition.

It must be emphasized that only appropriate non-perception (yogyānupalabdhi) can serve as a pramāṇa of non-existence, for not every non-apprehension of an object is evidence of its non-existence. If the room, for example, in which one does not see the desk is dark, the absence of the desk is not conclusively proved. Non-apprehension could be considered appropriate in a situation where the object would have been perceived if it have been present. If the room is well lit, anupalabdhi of the desk is appropriate (yogya).[61]

The Vedānta-Paribhāsā describes four kinds of non-existence, all cognizable by appropriate anupalabdhi:[62]

1. Previous non-existence (prāgabhāva). This is the absence of an effect (e.g. a jar) in its cause (e.g. clay) before the origination of the effect. Prāgabhāva has no beginning, but comes to an end when the effect is

produced.

2. Non-existence as destruction (pradhvansābhāva). When the jar, for instance, is broken, its non-existence in the component parts is an example of pradhvansābhāva. When these parts are further broken up, then this destruction is also destroyed. This does not, however, imply the reappearance of the jar on the analogy that two negatives make a positive. According to Advaita, therefore, non-existence as destruction has both a beginning and an end.[63]

3. Absolute non-existence (atyantābhāva). That which does not exist in a particular locus at any time, past, present or future, has absolute non-existence there (e.g. horns of a hare). Absolute non-existence is beginningless, but comes to an end when its locus, being non-eternal, is destroyed.

4. Mutual non-existence (anyonyābhāva). This is the difference cognized in a statement such as, "The dog is not a man". Anyonyābhāva has a beginning when its locus has a beginning, as in the difference between a jar and a piece of cloth. It is beginningless if its substratum enjoys the same characteristic, as in the difference of the jīva and īśvara. All differences, however, are eventually negated in the knowledge of the non-dual brahman.

(VI). Śabda-pramāṇa

The term śabda, includes both articulate (varṇa) and inarticulate (dhvani) sounds.[64] As a means of valid knowledge (śabda-pramāṇa), it refers to a meaningful, articulate sound, spoken or written, consisting of a single word or a group of words.[65] Śabda-pramāna is accepted by Sāṃkhya, Nyāya, Pūrva-Mīmānsā and Vedānta schools of Indian philosophy. There is no unanimity of interpretation and understanding of the concept in these different systems. In their attempts to explain and justify śabda as a pramāṇa, proponents of Advaita had to consider many questions relating to the nature of the word, the structure of language and its relationship with meaning, and different levels of meaning. We shall now examine some of these theories which are relevant to our understanding of śabda-pramāṇa.[66]

(A). Individual sounds and synthetic meanings

One of the primary questions investigated was the possibility of deriving whole meanings from the individual sounds of which words were composed.[67] The sounds which make up any word are presented separately to the hearer in the sequence in which they occur. They are not apprehended conjointly. In the word, "venerable", for example, the sound, "ve", is heard before any of the other sounds are apprehended. As each sound is apprehended, those which immediately precede it pass out of existence

and the subsequent ones are unuttered. There is no single moment therefore, so it is argued, when all the sounds are received together. How then is it possible to comprehend all three syllables of "venerable" as a unitive expression? If it is argued that though the sounds are perceived separately they are united by being remembered in conjunction, then it is replied that even in memory they will be reproduced in the sequence in which they are first perceived.[68]

To obviate these difficulties, the Indian grammarians (vaiyākaraṇas) postulated the theory of sphoṭa.[69] Corresponding to each word and sentence, there is a latent, unperceived and indivisible sphoṭa which conveys its meaning. As the sounds of which a word is composed are sequentially uttered, the corresponding sphoṭa is progressively revealed. It is fully revealed when the last syllable is uttered. Since the sphoṭa is conceived by its advocates to be eternal (nitya) and indivisible (niravyava), there is no question of a time sequence and it can be grasped as a whole. The syllables of any word only serve to reveal the sphoṭa and do not themselves present its meaning.[70] The theory of sphoṭa (sphoṭavāda) is completely rejected by Shankara.[71] His argument is that it raises the identical difficulties which it is intended to circumvent. If a sound series which is sequentially revealed cannot manifest the word meaning, it must be incapable also of manifesting the sphoṭa. If the individually perceived sounds are capable of disclosing the sphoṭa, there is no reason why they should not unfold the meaning of the whole word. Shankara also

argues that the problem of the unitive perception of a series does not belong to a sound series alone. Other examples are a forest of trees, an army of soldiers and a line of ants. What is needed is a general solution applicable to all such series. His own explanation is that even though the letter-sounds of any word are successively perceived, the intellect (buddhi) possesses the capacity to synthesize elements which are serially cognized. He refers to this intellectual function as samastapratyavamarśini buddhi (intellect looking back on past experiences as a whole). If this is acceptable, there is no need to posit a separate theory to explain the perception of a sound series. The word itself therefore, in Shankara's view, is capable of divulging its meaning without any mediating factor.

(B). Conditions of word combination

Words, though directly revealing their meanings, are generally used in conjunction with other words and are usually most effective and potent in such combinations. The basic unit of śabda-pramāna is the sentence (vākya) which has been defined as follows:

> That sentence is a means of valid knowledge in which the relation (among the meanings of words) that is the object of its intention is not contradicted by any other means of valid knowledge.72

It is a complete expression of human thought, generally consisting of two or more words, one of which is the verb.[73] The implication of the above definition of Dharmarāja is

that the significance of a sentence is the relation among the meanings of the individual words which comprise it. The meaningfulness of the sentence therefore, does not depend only on the understanding of the meanings of its component words, which are recollected from memory. This is an important feature of the process of śabda-pramāṇa which distinguishes it from other means of valid knowledge. The comprehension of these relations is referred to as śabda-bodha, the sentence itself is termed śabda-pramāṇa and the valid knowledge communicated by it is śabda-pramā. The combination of word meanings to produce śabda-bodha occurs in the presence of specific and unique conditions, which identify and distinguish śabda as an independent means of valid knowledge. The standard classification enumerates four such conditions, which we shall now consider:[74]

1. Expectancy (ākāṅkshā). This has been defined as, "the capacity of the meanings of words to become objects of inquiry regarding each other".[75] The ability of words to enter significant combinations depends upon the general incompleteness of the isolated individual word, and the ability of other words to fulfil this incompleteness. The indeterminate and fragmentary significance of the detached word arouses the expectancy for other words which would consummate its meaning. A word signifying action awakens a desire for information regarding the subject of the activity, its object, time and place. Some words are more indeterminate in meaning than others and the degree of expectancy evoked by words differs. A preposition, adjective or verb is

comparatively less complete than a noun. The important point is that any meaningful sentence must satisfy the mutual expectancy of its constituent words.

2. Compatibility (yogyatā). This is the counterpart of expectancy. It has been defined as "non-contradiction of the relation [between the meaning of the words] that is intended".[76] Each word, as we have seen, has the capacity to kindle the desire for other meanings to complete its sense. Every other word, however, cannot appease this expectancy. The symbol which does it must enjoy a compatibility of meaning with its fellow-word. "She is the daughter of a barren woman", is an example of an incompatible combination of meanings. The internal relationship between the meanings of the words determines their combination. This must not be mutually contradictory. Some sentences however, such as, "tat tvam asi", are only apparently incompatible in meaning. Their significance can be found in their implied meanings.

3. Contiguity (āsatti). This has been defined as, "the apprehension, without an interval, of the meanings of words that is produced by those words".[77] In addition to the incompleteness of meaning of the solitary word, and the capacity of words to satisfy the mutual expectancy of their respective meanings, they must also be presented in close proximity in order that they may be construed together. In the case of written words, this proximity must be spatial, and

where the words are spoken, it should be temporal. Failure to meet this requirement makes it difficult to discover the meanings which are to be associated. In some cases, where particular words are omitted, they are to be supplied from the context in order to complete the meaning. The following is an example of a sentence lacking āsatti: "The son of the farmer won the prize who lives next door".

4. Intention or purport (tātparya). This is defined as, "the capacity to produce cognition of a particular thing".[78] Tātparya emphasizes the fact that sentences are the product of a speaker or writer, whose intention must be an important factor for consideration in deciphering meaning. Intention or purport has to be gathered from the particular context, the introduction and conclusion, and the general emphasis. It is not necessary to demonstrate that the meanings of words vary with context.[79]

(C). Relational and non-relational sentences

A sentence generally consists of a subject (uddeśya) and a predicate (vidheya) expressing a substantive-adjective relation (uddeśya-vidheya sambandha) between them. "The lotus is blue", signifies that the flower is characterized by "blueness". A sentence which expresses such a relation is termed a saṃsargāvagāhi vākyam, and the Mīmānsā contends

that all sentences are of this nature. While accepting such a relation to be the general characteristic of most sentences, Advaita contends that there are some cases where the intention is not to express a relational meaning, but to posit identity between the subject and predicate. This type of vākya is not samsargāvagāhi but akhandārthaka i.e. a sentence with identity as its purport. The sentence, "This is that Devadatta", is an example of this atypical kind. Analysis of this sentence reveals an incompatibility. "This", as indicating present time and space, and "that", referring to some other space and time, are clearly incompatible and cannot be indentical. The intention of the judgement cannot be to point out that the substantive (Devadatta), as determined by "this" is exactly the same as when determined by "that". It is clear, however, that the expression wants to demonstrate an identity. The sentence points out the identity of Devadatta in spite of the differences expressed by "this" and "that". In other words, identity is arrived at by negating the determinants which are seen as being incapable of affecting the persisting identity of Devadatta. There is no question of a relation being the intention here.[80]

The purpose of a sentence such as, "The most resplendent is the moon", is also to point out the moon to the exclusion of all objects appearing in the sky at night. The term "resplendent" negates any nonluminous body, while "most" distinguishes the moon from other luminous bodies in the sky. The noteworthy feature of this example is that it is not the intention of the speaker to relate the moon to any

other object. In response to the inquirer, he seeks only to identify it in the firmament. From the standpoint of only indicating the object of inquiry, this sentence can be said to be akhaṇḍārthaka.

(D). Levels of meaning

So far we have been discussing words in the sense of primary meanings alone. The theory of secondary meanings, however, is critically significant in the Advaita understanding of śabda-pramāṇa. It obviously pre-exists Shankara who used it to great advantage in his exegesis of Vedantic texts. A systematization of the theory is attempted by Dharmarāja in Vedānta-Paribhāsā.[81]

Primary meaning is, "the direct reference of words to their meanings".[82] An implied meaning is, "the object implied by a word".[83] The latter is described as being twofold:

1. Simple or pure implication (kevalalakshaṇā)
2. Double implication or implication by the implied (lakshitalakshaṇā)[84]

According to another classification, lakshaṇā is of three kinds.[85]

1. Exclusive implication (jahallakshaṇā).[86] One resorts to exclusive implication when the primary meaning of a word or sentence is excluded or abandoned in favour of the implied meaning. The standard

example of jahallakshanā is, "The village is on the Ganges". It is obvious that the direct meaning of "Ganges" is incompatible with the purport of the other words. The village could not be located on the surface of the water. Therefore, by exclusive implication, the term should be understood to refer to the banks of the river.

2. Non-exclusive implication (ajahallakshanā). This form of implication occurs where the primary meaning of a word is not excluded, but included along with its implied meaning. An example of it is, "The red is winning the race". Here "red" means red horse. Thus the word "red", without relinquishing its primary meaning of red colour, indicates, by non-exclusive implication, the red horse. In these instances, there is usually a change in the syntactical function of the word which narrows its meaning.

3. Exclusive-non-exclusive implication (jahadajahallakshanā). In this instance, only a part of the original meaning is retained, while the rest is rejected. In the example, "This is that Devadatta", the primary meaning of "this" is present time and place, and "that" points to an alternative time and space. These two being clearly incompatible, they are negated in favour of the individual free from spatial and temporal qualifications. The point of this example is not that Devadatta under the two different sets of conditions is absolutely identical.
In the past he might have been stout and wearing white

clothing. He is later seen to be lean and wearing blue clothing. The expression, "This is that Devadatta", does not posit an identity between the leanness and blue clothing of Devadatta, and his stoutness and white clothing. These accidental qualities are negated and what is qualified by them (i.e. Devadatta) is retained.[87]

Implication is necessitated primarily by the intention of a sentence rather than the logical connection of its words.[88] In Dharmarāja's example, "Protect the curd from the crows", there is no frustration of logical connection. Intention, however, is frustrated, for the purpose is the securing of the curd from all creatures. In the sentence, "The village is on the Ganges", there is frustration of both logical connection and intention. In this case, the frustration of intention which is common to both sentences, is the result of the frustration of logical connection. There is a need for recourse to implication only when the direct meaning is clearly impossible.[89] Implied meaning is discovered through the application of an arthāpatti (postulation) type of reasoning. The data for this are the recollected primary meanings and the intention of the speaker. The latter can be inferred from the general context. Depending on the context, the connection between the primary and implied meanings may be close or remote.[90]

(E). The validity of śabda-pramāṇa

Advaita argues for the acceptance of śabda as an independent and valid means of knowledge. It is seen as a unique method of access to information, and Advaita contends that it cannot be subsumed under any of the other pramāṇas. Śabda-pramāṇa, for example, cannot be reduced to the process of memory synthesis. The argument that the meaning of a sentence is apprehended by conjoining from memory the meanings of its individual words does not account for the resultant knowledge which may be entirely new. One can have verbal cognition of something not entirely known before.[91] We have seen that the comprehension of the significance of a sentence depends upon grasping the relation among the meanings of its individual words. It does not depend only on the cognition of an invariable relation between the perceived words and their meanings. For this reason therefore, śabda-pramāṇa cannot be reduced to inference, for the latter depends upon the knowledge of invariable concomitance.

Although the Naiyāyikas concur with Advaita in accepting śabda as a pramāṇa, there are important differences between both schools with regard to the question of validity.[92] The Naiyāyikas accepted śabda-pramāṇa on the grounds that it provides information which is not obtained from (even though it may be obtainable from) other sources. The status of śabda as a pramāṇa is not demolished by the fact that the information which it provides can be obtained from perception or inference. The important point is that the information is novel for the hearer. On the question of validity, however, the Naiyāyikas, consistent with

their theory of paratah-prāmānya-vāda, argue that it is to be inferred from the trustworthiness of the source. Against this claim, Advaita argues that validity is produced and known by the very conditions that generate knowledge. The application of the Nyāya theory, according to Advaita, leads to infinite regress. It is quite possible to see Advaita conceding the importance of the trustworthiness of the source in the production of validity. One imagines, however, that this factor will be understood as one of the intrinsic conditions. The Advaita argument therefore, is that in the absence of any grounds for contradiction or doubt, śabda, like any other pramāṇa, produces valid knowledge.

With an understanding of this general background of the nature and sources of valid knowledge in Advaita, we can now consider how Shankara applies these views in his conception of śruti as śabda-pramāṇa.

CHAPTER 3

THE VEDAS AS ŚABDA-PRAMĀṆA

Śabda, as we noted above, can be seen as a pramaṇa for our knowledge of the empirical world, as well as ultimate reality. Our earlier discussion treated śabda-pramāṇa in a more general sense. Advaita, however, is not primarily concerned with śabda-pramāṇa as a vehicle of secular knowledge. As such a medium, śabda cannot lay claim to any particular uniqueness, for the knowledge which it conveys is, in most cases, available through other sources.[1] As a pramaṇa of the empirical world, it does not have a sphere which is exclusively its own, and which, by nature, it alone is capable of transmitting.[2] The special nature of śabda therefore, for Advaita, lies in its function as a means of knowledge for ultimate reality. In this capacity, śabda-pramāṇa is synonymous with the Vedas or śruti.[3] Advaita seeks to justify the view that, because of the very nature of reality, the Vedas alone can transmit accurate knowledge. All of the theories about śabda-pramāṇa have emerged as a result of this central concern and the need to defend it against the criticisms of other Indian schools. We hope to show in the discussion below that Shankara posits no alternative to the Vedas for our knowledge of brahman. His acceptance of the function of the avatāra as a teacher, and

the world, in general, as a revelation of brahman does not contradict the necessity for the Vedas.

Shankara's views on the nature of the avatāra and His role as revealer emerge from his commentary on the Bhagavadgītā. In his introduction to the text, Shankara states that the Lord, after creating the world and the forefathers of man (prajāpatis), imparted to them the twofold paths of Works (pravritti dharma) and Renunciation (nivritti dharma), meant respectively for worldly prosperity and liberation. By this twofold path, He intended to secure order in the universe. When, however, as a result of unrestrained desire, man's discrimination was overwhelmed and religion declined, the Lord incarnated Himself as Krishna, for the purpose of reintroducing and strengthening the Vedic religion.[4]

> Whenever there is a decay of Dharma, O Bharata, and an ascendancy of Adharma, then I manifest Myself.
>
> For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the firm establishment of Dharma, I am born in every age.5

Shankara emphasizes that the Lord is by nature eternal, pure, intelligent and free. Through the unimpeded control of His creative power (māyā), He appears as though embodied. Whereas the individual is born under the control of māyā, the Lord incarnates through the mastery of māyā. It is a voluntary, self-conscious descent, in full awareness of His majesty.

> Though I am unborn, of imperishable nature, and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet ruling over My own nature, I am born by my own Māyā.6

In the Bhagavadgītā, the avatāra is not limited by embodiment. Arjuna is limited in knowledge, but Krishna is conscious of

all previous births of them both.[7] Past, present and future are all spanned in His awareness.[8] The descent of the avatāra is not for any personal need or desire born out of a sense of limitation. He is an already fully accomplished being whose actions are not characterized by any motive of personal achievement.

> I have nothing whatsoever to achieve in the three worlds, O son of Pritha, nor is there anything unattained that should be attained; yet I engage in action.9

His actions are directed to world welfare and preservation.[10]

With reference to His instruction of Arjuna, Shankara writes,

> Without any interest of His own, but with the sole intention of helping His creatures, He taught to Arjuna, who was deeply plunged in the ocean of grief and delusion, the two-fold Vedic Religion, evidently thinking that the Religion would widely spread when accepted and practised by men of high character.11

The cardinal point to be noted in Shankara's discussion of the avatāra as revealer is that He revivifies and reiterates the doctrines of the Vedas. The Bhagavadgītā, according to Shankara, "is an epitome of the essentials of the whole Vedic teaching", and is not at variance with it.[12] The instructions of the avatāra are in the form of a restatement and do not in any way supersede the primacy of the Vedic revelation. Krishna does not claim to be instituting a new path to freedom, but emphasizes His traditional links and the conventional approach.

> I taught this imperishable Yoga to Vivasvat; Vivasvat taught it to Manu; Manu taught it to Ikshvāku.
>
> This, handed down thus in succession, the King-sages learnt. This Yoga, by long lapse of time, has been lost here, O harasser of foes.
>
> That same ancient Yoga has been today taught to thee by Me, seeing that thou art My devotee and friend; for, this is the Supreme Secret.13

It is clear therefore, that even in relation to the role of the avatāra, the Vedas remain the original and authoritative pramāṇa of brahman.

There are several passages in the commentaries of Shankara where he suggests that brahman is directly and self-evidently revealed in the world and in man. In response to an objection that if brahman is a completely unknown entity It cannot become the subject of inquiry, Shankara replies, "that the existence of Brahman is well known from the fact of Its being the Self of all; for everyone feels that his Self exists, and he never feels, 'I do not exist'. Had there been no general recognition of the existence of the Self, everyone would have felt, 'I do not exist'. And that Self is Brahman".[14] Earlier on also, in replying to a query that an unperceived Self cannot become the locus of superimposition, he contends that the Self is well known in the world as an immediately perceived entity. It is nothing but the content of the concept "I".[15] Elsewhere, he remarks that in all cognitions, brahman as absolute Existence is cognized.[16] Each cognition involves a twofold consciousness of the real and unreal. In a cognition such as, "This is a post", the object is limited and finite. But the consciousness of Existence or "Is-ness", which is the persisting substratum of the object, is eternal. From the standpoint of Shankara, the entire universe can be seen as a name and form revealing of brahman with Whom it is identical.

The problem with these general forms of revelation, if they can be so termed, is that we are not, through them, made aware of the distinctive nature of brahman. Shankara develops his argument about the self-evident manifestation of the ātman as the content of the "I" notion, by pointing out that, in spite of this knowledge, the unique nature of the Self remains unknown. As evidence of this, he cites the divergent and mutually contradictory views which different systems hold about the nature of the Self.[17] The point therefore, is that even though we are not completely debarred from all awareness of reality, we do not recognize its existence and our understanding is incomplete. What is needed is a valid source of knowledge through which we can apprehend accurately the unique nature of the Self. The Vedas, Shankara contends, is just such a pramāna.

3.1 The Eternity of the Vedic Revelation

It is an important contention of both Advaita Vedānta and Pūrva-Mīmānsā that the Vedas are eternal, uncreated and authorless (apaurusheya). The claim for the infallibility of these texts follows directly from this contention. If a personal author is ascribed to the Vedas, they will suffer from the limitations of authorship, and their status as a defect-free source of knowledge will be under doubt. Against the eternity of the Vedas, it may be argued that words originate along with or only after the objects which they

signify have come into existence. They are as time-bound as their objects and can in no sense therefore, be eternal. The assumption here is that the Vedas can be eternal only if the words of which they are composed are established to be so, and words are as transient as the particular things which they signify. This objection, Advaita claims, will be valid if the Vedic words did indeed primarily signify the particular ephemeral objects of the world. To meet this objection and in order to justify the eternity of the Vedas, Advaita argues that the primary significance of words are universals and not individuals. As universals are eternal, the connection between the word and the object signified is an eternal one.[18] A universal, as conceived by Advaita, indicates the essential common characteristics existing in a group of particulars. It signifies both the generic shape (ākriti) and also the generic nature (jāti).[19]

The inquiry about whether a word primarily signifies a particular (vyakti) or a universal (jāti) has elicited a variety of views among the different schools of Indian thought and the Advaita position is better highlighted in relation to some of these views.[20] According to the Sāmkhyas, a word signifies a particular only, for it is with individuals alone that we deal in everyday usage and activity. If the primary meaning of a word is its essential common characteristics, how can it be applicable to an individual? When someone says, "The horse is in the field", he is invariably referring to a particular member of the species. Besides this, there are proper names which are singular and can never refer to a

group or class.

The main Advaita argument against this view is that if the primary significance of a word is a particular, the word cannot be used more than once. Each individual is unique and the particular as known at one moment does not persist as the same in the next moment. The fact that the same word can be used repeatedly indicates that its primary significance is not an individual. Shankara adds that objects are limitless in number and if the primary denotation of a word is an individual, it could not indicate all of them.[21] In isolation, the word "horse" does not indicate any particular animal, but the essential characteristics of the species. It is the knowledge of the universal which leads to the recognition of the particular. To recognize a particular animal as a horse, one has to first apprehend the universal characteristics of the species, and these are the primary denotation of a word. This fact does not make it impossible for a word to denote a particular object, for the knowledge of the particular is subsumed under the universal. According to Dharmarāja, "the same cognition that comprehends a generic attribute also comprehends the individuals".[22] One may put the argument differently by saying that the individual significance is indirect or implicit, while its universal significance is direct or explicit. It is thus possible, according to Advaita, to conceive of words as being prior to all individuals and eternal.

This theory, however, raises a problem for both

Pūrva-Mīmānsā and Advaita. The Vedas make mention of gods such as Vasu and Indra, and, according to this view, words cannot primarily indicate an individual. In this case, they will become non-eternal, having no referent before the individual's existence and after the individual's destruction. Shankara's view is that Vedic words such as Vasu signify distinctive general characteristics, for even gods have forms and species. These general characteristics can be gathered from the Vedas. On the other hand, words such as "Indra" indicate certain ranks like "commander". The conclusion therefore, that Vedic words are universal in significance, is not refuted. The names of gods are not interpreted to be proper names.[23]

The eternal word, according to Shankara, is not of the nature of sphota.[24] Along with the teacher Upavarsha, he holds that "the letters themselves constitute the words".[25] Is it not a fact, however, that letters are non-eternal, for they possess no reality before and after their utterance? This is not tenable in Shankara's view, for the letters are recognized to be the same in each new utterance. This recognition is not because of any similarity with a previous utterance, nor is it contradicted by any other means of knowledge. He also rejects the view that this recognition is produced by the fact of the letters belonging to the same species (jāti).

> The recognition would have been caused by the species if the letters were cognized as separate entities like individual cows at the time of each fresh utterance. But this is not so, for it is the letters themselves that are cognized to be the same at each fresh utterance,

> the recognition taking the form, 'The word cow is uttered twice', but not, 'There are two words 'cow'.26

The letters, in other words, are not individuals which constitute a class as cows comprise a species. He admits a variation in the apprehension of syllables, but ascribes this to differences in pronunciation due to peculiarities of the vocal organs, and not to be intrinsic nature of the letters. Differences can also be attributed to variations of tone (dhvani).[27] Shankara's conclusion so far seems to be that since letters are recognized to be the same in each new utterance, they are eternal, and the words which they constitute share this nature. In addition to this, words are eternally connected to their referents, which, being universals, are also eternal.[28]

As further evidence of the beginninglessness of the Vedas, Shankara remarks that no independent author of the Vedas is remembered.[29] This is an argument which was also adduced by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. He contends that if there was an author of the Vedas, he should have been remembered in the long traditional succession of teachers and students as in the case of, for example, the Buddha. There is no possibility of such an author being forgotten since religious performance and their effectiveness would be founded solely upon his authority. In reality, however, there are no clear ideas of any composer and some vaguely attribute authorship to "God", "Hiranyagarbha", or "Prajāpati".[30] In replying to the argument that the Vedas must have human authors because some sections are named after certain men,[31] Jaimini explains that this can be accounted for by

the fact that such men were foremost in the study and expounding of those portions.[32]

Another important argument introduced by Shankara is the origin of the world from Vedic words. According to him, it is a matter of common experience that when one is intent on creating a desirable object, he first recollects the word signifying it and then produces it. The sequence is the same in the case of the creation of the world. Vedic words occur in the mind of Prajāpati when he is intent on creation, and, corresponding to them, he creates the universe.[33] He creates the earth, for example, after the word bhūh occurs in his mind. This view does not contradict the Advaita doctrine of brahman as the material cause of creation, for it means simply that, "when there is first a word without a beginning and bearing a meaning with which it has an eternal connnection, then only is there a possibility of an individual cropping up which can be fit to be referred to by that word. In that sense, it is said to originate from a word".[34] Shankara states that the creation of the world from Vedic words is well known from śruti and smriti and he cites several references to support his claim.[35] Shankara would appear to be implying that the universe is cyclically created in conformity with ideas or universals which are eternally present in the Creator. One wonders therefore, whether by "word", he is really suggesting "idea" rather than the uttered sound or linguistic symbol. A distinction between the two would have been very useful here. The word śabda is used to denote both idea and sound symbol.

Shankara considers another objection to the eternity of the Vedas. The objector accepts that the doctrine is maintained if one understands names such as Indra, etc. to connote eternal species rather than individuals. He contends, however, that the doctrine cannot be argued "in the face of the statements in the Vedas and smrtis that the whole creation, consisting of the three worlds, loses its names and forms and gets dissolved without a trace, and it emerges again as a fresh entity".[36] Shankara's reply is that the cyclical creation and dissolution does not refute the eternity of the Vedas because the names and forms of each creation are the same as those of the preceding world that was dissolved.[37] The analogy can be drawn between the creation and dissolution of the world and the individual states of deep sleep and waking. In both cases, there is a connection and continuity of activity with earlier states. But is this an appropriate analogy? The individual can easily recollect his earlier behaviour and activity after emerging from deep sleep, but is such a recall possible after all behaviour is eradicated in cosmic dissolution? Shankara concedes that all empirical activity ceases at the time of dissolution (māhapralaya), but argues that because of God's grace, gods like Hiranyagarbha can recall names and forms of earlier cycles, including the Vedas.

> From the fact that ordinary creatures are not seen to recollect their past lives, it does not follow that the fact must be the same in the case of divine beings as well. It is noticed that although as living creatures all are the same, counting from men to a clump of grass, still the obstruction to the manifestation of knowledge, glory, etc. increases successively all through the series at every stage; similarly when it is mentioned more than once in the Vedas and Smṛtis that knowledge,

glory etc. become increasingly more manifest at each successive stage counting from men themselves up to Hiraṇyagarbha, it cannot be brushed aside as non-existent. From this, it logically follows, on the analogy of a man risen up from sleep, that the recollection of the behaviour in a past cycle is possible for beings like Hiraṇyagarbha, who had undertaken meditation and work in a superexcellent way in a past cycle, who have emerged at the beginning of the present cycle (as a result of past achievement) and who have been vouchsafed the grace of God.38

Another reason justifying the identity of names and forms in successive creations is tendered by Shankara. Each new creation is impelled by the necessity of beings to experience the results of virtuous and unmeritorious acts of the past. It is also a field for the expression of likes and dislikes. It is not a causeless or accidental event and must therefore, conform to earlier patterns. The new creation is potential in the past ones. It is not possible, according to Shankara, to conceive, for example, a different relation between senses and sense objects in each creation.

It is reasonable to conclude from this discussion, that Shankara conceives the eternity of the Vedas in the sense of an identical but eternal flow (pravāha nityatā). The eternity of brahman, on the other hand, is of an absolutely unchanging kind (kūtastha nityatā). It would appear therefore, that Shankara ascribes to the Vedas the same empirical (vyāvahārika) level of reality as the world, for he admits that the Vedas, like the world, are negated in the knowledge of non-dual brahman.[39]

3.2 Īśvara as Revealer of the Vedas

Pūrva-Mīmānsā uncompromisingly rejects the view that the Vedas were ever composed by anyone. Nyāya, on the other hand, ascribes authorship to īśvara, whose existence they seek to establish inferentially. Shankara occupies a position between these two views.[40] Like the Mīmānsā, but unlike Nyāya, Shankara admits the Vedas to be authorless (apaurusheya).[41] He seems, however, to understand this concept very differently, even though he does not offer us a definition anywhere. Commenting on Brahma-sūtra 1.1.3, Shankara explains why brahman alone can be the source of the Vedas.[42] It is a well known fact, he asserts, that the author of a text on any subject is more informed than the text itself. The grammar of Panini, for instance, represents only a part of the subject known to him. It is obvious therefore, that the source of texts like the Vedas, divided into many branches and illuminating lamp-like a variety of subjects, must be omniscient and omnipotent. This is even more apparent from the effortlessness with which they emerge from Him. The Vedas compare their own emergence with the ease of breathing.[43] Shankara states very clearly, however, that it is the eternally composed and already existent Vedas that are manifest like a man's breath.[44] Elsewhere, he explains that the projection of the Vedas should only be understood in the sense of the initiation of a cycle of transmission through a line of teachers and students, for no other kind of projection is possible for a text without beginning and end.[45] Īśvara

then, does not produce the Vedas but reveals or manifests them as they were in the previous creation. He offers various suggestions to this effect.[46] The general idea is that the Vedas are revealed in the same linguistic form at the beginning of each creation to qualified seers.

Further clarification of Shankara's understanding of the concept of apaurusheya is provided by Dharmarāja and Vācaspati. According to Dharmarāja, the Vedas are not eternal because they are produced by brahman. They are not, however, paurusheya because they depend on utterance of the same kind. A sentence can be described as paurusheya only if it is original and not the reproduction of an earlier utterance.

> For instance, in the beginning of the cosmic projection, the Lord produced the Vedas having a sequence of words similar to that which had already existed in the Vedas in the previous cosmic projection, and not Vedas of a different type. Hence the Vedas, not being the object of utterance that is independent of any utterance of the same kind, are not connected with a person. The utterance of the Mahābhārata etc., however, is not at all dependent on any utterance of the same kind. Thus two kinds of verbal testimony have been determined, viz., that which is connected with a person and that which is not.47

Vācaspati argues along similar lines.[48] Pūrva-Mīmānsākas, he says, who do not believe in a creation or destruction advocate a beginningless and unbroken sequence of Vedic study. Advaita, however, although differing from them in accepting the Supreme Self to be the creator of the eternal Vedas, does not understand Him to be entirely free in respect of them, since He creates their sequence in conformity to the previous ones.

> Not in any creation is brāhminicide the cause of good nor the horse-sacrifice the cause of evil, any more

than fire can wet or water can burn. Just as, in this creation, the study of the Vedas in the settled sequence is the cause of prosperity and beatitude, and (studied) otherwise is the cause of evil even as a verbal thunderbolt, even so does it happen in another creation; hence, the creator, who, though omnipotent and omniscient, creates the Vedas in accordance with what they were in earlier creations, has not a free hand. 49

3.3 The Necessity and Justification of the Vedas as a Pramāna

The general justification of Shankara for a special means of knowledge like the Vedas is that it provides the knowledge of those things which cannot be known through any of the other available sources of knowledge. More specifically, it informs us of the means of attaining good and avoiding evil, in so far as these cannot be known through perception and inference, and are the two ends naturally pursued by us. The Vedas are not concerned to provide information about these dual objectives to the extent that they are within the range of human experience. Such knowledge is easily available from perception and inference.[50] One imagines, for example, that a scripture is not necessary for instruction about road safety.

The two categories of knowledge, according to Shankara, inaccessible to all other pramānas and attainable exclusively through the Vedas are dharma and brahman.[51] We are afforded a clear statement of Shankara's view on the knowledge of dharma in his commentary on Brahma-sūtra 3.1.25.[52] Here he

is responding to the objector's (pūrvapakshin) claim that the slaying of animals in sacrifices might be responsible for the soul's birth as a plant. He answers that the knowledge of merit (dharma) and demerit (adharma) is derived solely from the scriptures. From the Vedas alone we can know which acts are virtuous and which are not. The reason is that these are supersensuous realities, beyond the capacity of the senses. In addition to this, dharma and adharma vary with time and place. An act that may be sanctioned at a certain time and place and under some circumstances may not be approved with a change of these factors. It is impossible therefore, to learn of dharma from any other source.[53]

It is necessary, however, for the individual to be made aware of the persisting existence of the Self in a future life if he is to be motivated to attain what is good in that life. The materialists (Cārvākas), for example, who deny all future existence do not show any such concern. Śruti therefore, informs us of this future existence and of the particular means of attaining good and avoiding evil in that life.[54] In a typical discussion which illustrates very well his procedure for legitimizing the Vedas as a pramāna, Shankara shows why this knowledge of a future existence is not otherwise attainable. After a series of Upanishad quotations to show support for the doctrine, a question is tendered.

Objection: Is it not a matter of perception?

Reply: No, for we see the divergence of opinion

among different schools. Were the existence of the self in a future body a matter of perception, the materialists and Buddhists would not stand opposed to us, saying that there is not self. For nobody disputes regarding an object of perception such as a jar, saying it does not exist.

Objection: You are wrong, since a stump, for instance is looked upon as a man and so on.

Reply: No, for it vanishes when the truth is known. There are no more contradictory views when the stump, for instance, has been definitely known as such through perception. The Buddhists, however, in spite of the fact that there is the ego-consciousness, persistently deny the existence of the self other than the subtle body. Therefore, being different from objects of perception, the existence of the self cannot be proved by this means. Similarly, inference too is powerless.

Objection: No, since the Śruti points out certain grounds of inference for the existence of the self, and these depend on perception, (these two are also efficient means of the knowledge of the self).

Reply: Not so, for the self cannot be perceived as having any relation to another life. But when its existence has been known from the Śruti and from certain empirical grounds of inference cited by it, the Mīmāṁsakas and logicians, who follow in its footsteps, fancy that those Vedic grounds of inference such as the ego-consciousness are the products of their own mind, and declare that the self is knowable through perception and inference.55

This knowledge of dharma and adharma is derived from the ceremonial portion (karmakāṇḍa) of the Vedas.[56] This does not, however, exhaust the authoritative subject matter of the Vedas. The karmakāṇḍa, authoritative as it is, is not accepted by Shankara as providing a solution to man's fundamental problem. It accepts man's desires for the enjoyment of the results of various actions, but does not question the origin or legitimacy of these desires. This propensity, as maintained by Shankara, is born out of a basic Self-ignorance, the perception of oneself as a limited being. As long as this false notion is not removed by the knowledge of one's already accomplished identity with

brahman, one continues to search for fullness through the results of limited actions. Actions, however, produce inescapable results and the individual is trapped in a futile quest through successive births and deaths (samsāra). His ever accomplished freedom and unlimitedness, the real end of all his actions, perpetually eludes him. The removal of this ignorance (avidyā) is the authoritative aim and concern of the jñānakānda (knowledge section) of the Vedas.[57] Śruti eliminates this ignorance by teaching about the true nature of the Self. It is the intention of all the Upanishads Shankara says, to establish the identity between ātman and brahman.[58]

> We hold that it is the definite conclusion of all the Upanisads that we are nothing but the Atman, the Brahman that is always the same, homogeneous, one without a second, unchanging, birthless, undecaying, immortal, deathless and free from fear.59

Shankara is equally emphatic on the absolute inapplicability of all pramāṇas except śruti, to the knowledge of brahman.[60] He is tireless in explaining the incompetence of sense perception in apprehending brahman. Shankara refuses to accept that because brahman is an existent entity, like all such realities, It must be the object of other sources of valid knowledge. The senses are naturally capable of grasping and revealing their appropriate objects. Brahman, however, remains unapproachable through any of them because of Its uniqueness.[61] The organs can only grasp a differentiated object within their range.[62] We have already considered the nature and evolution of the five sense organs.[63] Each organ evolves out of a particular element which enables it to apprehend a quality proper to

that element. The eyes, for example, evolve out of the subtle sattva aspect of fire, and are the organs for perceiving the quality of form, which is unique to fire.[64] It is the special relationship therefore, between sense organ and element which empowers each one to cognize an appropriate quality. Sound, sensation, form, taste and scent are their respective spheres of functioning. Brahman, however, has neither sound, touch, form, taste or smell. It is without qualities (nirguna) and outside the domain of the sense organs.[65] Brahman is limitless, and to become an object of sense knowledge is to be finite and delimited, to be one object among many objects. A brahman that is sense apprehended is therefore, a contradiction. However perfect or magnified the capacity of a sense organs is imagined to be, it will function only in a limited sphere of activity. Shankara refutes the allegation that there is any contradiction in the Bhagavadgītā's denial of brahman as both sat and asat, by interpreting these terms with reference to the non-availability of brahman as an object of sense knowledge.

> Objection: Every state of consciousness involves either the consciousness of existence or that of non-existence. Such being the case, the Knowable should be comprehended either by a state of consciousness accompanied with the consciousness of existence, or by a state of consciousness accompanied with the consciousness of non-existence.
>
> Answer: No; for being beyond the reach of the senses, it is not an object of consciousness accompanied with the idea of either (existence or non-existence). That thing, indeed, which can be perceived by the senses, such as a pot, can be an object of consciousness accompanied with the idea of existence, or an object of consciousness accompanied by the idea of non-existence. Since, on the other hand, the Knowable is beyond the reach of the senses and as such can be known solely through that instrument of knowledge which is called

> Sabda, It cannot be, like a pot, etc., an object of consciousness accompanied with the idea of either (existence or non-existence) and is therefore not said to be 'sat' or 'asat'.66

In addition to the inherent limitations of the sense organs and the absence in brahman of any quality that can be apprehended by any one of them, there is the impossibility of objectifying brahman. The process of empirical knowledge involves a distinction between the Subject and object, the Knower and known. We know things by making them the objects of our Awareness and in this way they are available for our scrutiny and analysis. Knowledge of an object presupposes the Subject, the Knower. Brahman, however, is the eternal Subject. As Awareness, It illumines everything, and the entire universe, including mind, body and sense organs, is Its object.[67] It is impossible for the unchanging Knower to be made an object of knowledge, like a pot or a thought. It is absurd to conceive of the Subject as an object, for in Its absence there is no Subject to know the Subject as an object. It is the Light even of lights.[68]

> Even in the state of ignorance, when one sees something, through what instrument should one know that owing to which all this is known? For that instrument of knowledge itself falls under the category of objects. The Knower may desire to know, not about itself, but about objects. As fire does not burn itself, so the self does not know itself, and the knower can have no knowledge of a thing that is not its object. Therefore through what instrument should one know the Knower owing to which this universe is known and who else should know it?69

It is not possible to circumvent this difficulty by positing that the Self can be both Subject and object. This might have been tenable if the Subject and object were complementary and not opposed. By nature, however, the Subject and object are absolutely opposed and such contradictory

qualities cannot be posited of the same entity.[70] No division of any kind can be made in the case of the ātman.[71]

If perception is unfitted for furnishing us with the knowledge of brahman, are any of the other four pramāṇas (inference, comparison, postulation, and non-cognition) more competent? The general view of Shankara is that these sources are more or less dependent on perception for their data, and can have no access to areas from which it is debarred. We have already, for instance, considered the nature of inference as a pramāṇa.[72] Inferential knowledge is derived from a knowledge of the invariable relation (vyāpti) between a thing inferred (sādhya) and the ground from which the inference is made (hetu). Brahman, however, has no apprehensible or differentiating qualities with which it has an invariable relation and which can form the ground of an inference.[73] It is impossible, therefore, to infer the existence of brahman.

There is no hint, however, of the sceptic in Shankara. He is unwavering in his position that brahman is knowable and the śabda-pramāṇa is the only valid means. In a discussion where he is concerned to establish that brahman is changeless and indivisible in spite of being the material cause of the creation, his views are unequivocal.

> There is no violation of the texts about partlessness, since partlessness is accepted on account of its very 'mention in the Upaniṣads', and the Upaniṣads are the only authority about it, but not so are the senses etc. Hence it has to be accepted just as it is presented by the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads prove both the facts for Brahman - the non-transformation of Brahman as a whole

and partlessness. Even the things of this world like gems, incantations, herbs, and so on, are seen to possess many powers capable of producing incompatible effects under a variety of space (environment), time, and cause. And even these powers can be known not from mere reasoning but from such instructions as, 'Such a thing has such kinds of potency with the aid of such things, on such things, and for such purposes'. So what need has one to argue that the nature of Brahman, whose power is beyond all thought, cannot be ascertained unless it be through the Vedas? So also it has been said by an author of the Purāṇa, 'Do not bring those things within the range of argumentation which are beyond thought. The nature of a thing beyond thought consists in its being other than the things within Nature'. Hence a supersensuous thing is truly known from the Vedic source alone.74

It is not possible, according to Shankara, to even guess about brahman without the assistance of the Vedas.[75] He leaves no room for any doubt about this conclusion. Brahma-sūtra 1.1.2, for instance, reads "That (is Brahman) from which (are derived) the birth etc. of this (universe)". The following sūtra (1.1.3) reads, "Because of being the source of the scriptures". Shankara sees another possibility in the Sanskrit compound of the latter and reads it also as, "Since the scriptures are its valid means".[76] He justifies this reading on the ground that since sūtra 1.1.2 made no explicit mention of the scriptures, one might construe that an inferential argument is being presented for establishing brahman as the source of the world. Any such doubt ought to be removed and it must be made clear that brahman is known as the source of the universe from the scriptures alone. They are the only valid means of this knowledge.[77] We can briefly note that Shankara also dismisses independent reasoning as a suitable means of arriving at accurate knoledge of brahman.[78]

One has to be extremely cautious in examining Shankara's exegesis of Upanishad verses treating the unknowability of the Self. He never accepts any of these passages literally and there is no basis for concluding, as some have done, that in Shankara's view, none of the pramāṇas can give us knowledge of brahman.[79] There are basically two ways in which Shankara interprets these statements. First of all, the Self is unknowable in the sense and manner of an object. The knowing process generally involves the knowledge of an object different from oneself. As the eternal Knower, the Witness of every cognition, brahman can never be "known" in this manner.

> (Teacher): If you think, 'I have known Brahman well enough', then you have known only the very little expression that It has in the human body and the little expression It has among the gods. Therefore Brahman is still to be deliberated on by you.
> (Disciple): 'I think (Brahman) is known'.
>
> "I do not think, 'I know (brahman) well enough'; (i.e. I consider) 'Not that I do not know: I know and I do not know as well. He among us who understands that utterance, 'Not that I do not know: I know and I do not know as well', knows that (Brahman)'.
>
> It is known to him to whom It is unknown; he does not know to whom It is known. It is unknown to those who know well, and known to those who do not know.80

Secondly, brahman is unknown in the sense of being undisclosed through any other pramāṇa but śabda-pramāṇa. Brihadāranyaka Upanishad 3.6.1, for example, consists of a discussion between Gārgī and Yājñavalkya. Beginning with earth and ending with the world of Hiranyagarbha, Gārgī questions him about the successive pervasiveness of each factor. According to Shankara, the inference suggested here is that, "whatever is an effect, limited and gross, is respectively pervaded by that which is the cause, unlimited and subtle,

as earth is pervaded by water".[81] When Gārgī, however, asks, "By what is the world of Hiranygarbha pervaded?", Yājñavalkya refuses to proceed with the discussion.

> 'Do not, O Gārgī, push your inquiry too far, lest your head should fall off. You are questioning about a deity that should not be reasoned about. Do not, O Gārgī, push your inquiry too far'. Thereupon Gārgī, the daughter of Vacaknu, kept silent.

Shankara does not construe Yājñavalkya's silence as an indication of the impossibility of any further knowledge. On the contrary, he charges Gārgī with disregarding the proper method of inquiry. Yājñavalkya terminates the discussion, according to Shankara, because of Gārgī's attempt to establish brahman inferentially, whereas It is to be known only from the Vedas. The idea is that brahman is not unascertainable, but must be approached through the apposite pramana.[82] Kena Upanishad 1.3, is a classic declaration of the predicament of conceptualization and instruction about brahman.

> The eye does not go there, nor speech, nor mind. We do not know (Brahman to be such and such); hence we are not aware of any process of instructing about It.

Shankara does not reiterate this sense of perplexity and impotence. Concluding his remarks on this verse and introducing the following one, he writes,

> The contingency of the total denial of any process of instruction having arisen from the text, 'We do not know Brahman, and hence we are not aware of any process of instructing about It', an exception to this is being stated in the next verse. True it is that one cannot impart knowledge of the highest with the help of such means of valid knowledge as the evidence of the senses; but the knowledge can be produced with the help of traditional authority. Therefore traditional authority [āgama] is being quoted for the sake of imparting instruction about It.83

It is palpable therefore, that Shankara presents an argued and developed rationale for śabda-pramāna as the only source of brahmajñāna. Radhakrishnan's view that it is difficult to find support in Shankara for the claim that inquiry into the Vedas is the only avenue to the knowledge of brahman is absolutely without basis.[84] Unsubstantial also is Devaraja's argument that Shankara's reliance on śruti is an expression of his "ultra-orthodox mood".[85] It is not at all possible to dismiss Shankara's affirmation of the śruti as simply an attempt to clothe his views with a sanction of a traditional authority. One may perhaps dispute his exegesis of particular scriptural passages, but not his endorsement of śruti as the only credible pramāna of brahmajñāna.

3.4 The Authority and Infallibility of the Vedic Revelation

The authority of the śruti within the sphere of its own subject matter is, according to Shankara, independent and self-evident. Its function in relation to the revelation of brahman is comparable to the perception of an object through the eye.[86] This independent authoritativeness is underscored by his analogy with the sun. The Vedas, he says, are as trustworthy in respect of their own subject matter, as the sun is with regards to the objects which it illumines.[87] The suggestion here seems to be that while objects depend for their revelation on the light of the sun, the sun itself

is self-illuminating. Similarly, the authoritativeness of the śruti is independent and self-evident. The validity of the Upanishad does not await inferential verification.[88] There are no misgivings about śruti's infallibility in respect of its subject matter. "Knowledge of Reality springs from the Upanisad texts alone".[89] "Truth is the fact of being in accordance with the scriptures".[90] Vedic statements, he affirms, unlike those of men, are not delusive, equivocal or deceptive about their theme.[91] They admit of no doubt and are productive of accurate knowledge.[92] In this respect, there is no difference between ritualistic texts and those informing us of the nature of brahman.

> That rites like the new and full moon sacrifices produce such and such results, and have to be performed in a certain definite way, with their parts following each other in a particular order, is a supersensuous matter beyond the range of our perception and inference, which we nevertheless understand as true solely from the words of the Vedas. Similarly it stands to reason that entities like the Supreme Self, God, the deities, etc. of which we learn, also from the words of the Vedas, as being characterized by the absence of grossness etc., being beyond hunger and thirst and the like, and so on, must be true, for they are equally supersensuous matters. There is no difference between texts relating to knowledge and those relating to rites as regards producing an impression. Nor is the impression conveyed by the Vedas regarding the Supreme Self and other such entities indefinite or contrary to fact.93

In the main, however, Shankara's principal justification of the reliability and authoritativeness of the Vedas is an epistemological one. The śruti fulfils the criteria of being a pramāna. It has the capacity to generate certain and fruitful knowledge.

> Is or is not certain and fruitful knowledge generated by passages setting forth the nature of the Self, and if so, how can they lose their authority? Do you not see the result of knowledge in the removal of the evils which are the root of transmigration, such as ignorance, grief, delusion and fear? Or do you not hear those

> hundreds of Upaniṣad texts such as, 'Then what delusion and what grief can there be for one who sees unity'? (Is.U. 7).94

In addition to its fruitfulness, this knowledge can neither be produced nor nullified by any other pramāṇa, for there is none superior to the Vedic texts.[95] Sureśvara suggests four reasons when a pramāṇa may be disregarded:[96] (i) if it reveals something already revealed by another authoritative source of knowledge. (ii) if its revelations are contradicted by another source of knowledge. (iii) if it reveals ambiguous or doubtful knowledge. (iv) if it reveals nothing. The Vedas, however, according to him, reveal brahman which is beyond the scope of all other pramāṇas. Their revelations are neither ambiguous nor contradicted by any other pramāṇas. In addition, they are productive of fruitful knowledge.[97] A similar view has been tendered by Vācaspati. He argues that the authoritativeness of a pramāṇa consists in generating knowledge which is unsublated, not already understood, and indubitable. This capacity is an intrinsic one and not dependent on any other pramāṇa.[98]

At this stage, we can underline a conclusion which was only hinted at earlier. Advaita does not attempt to establish the authority or infallibility of the Vedas from the fact of Īśvara's omniscience. The reason is that Advaita finds it impossible to demonstrate the existence of God by any kind of independent reasoning. In the absence of such a proof, all arguments become helplessly circular, "omniscience being proved from the authority of the scriptures and the (authority of the) scriptures being proved

from the knowledge of the omniscience of the author".[99] In Indian philosophy, Nyāya champions the rational theology and seeks to establish God's existence by a syllogistic inference. This argument as we have seen, is based on a knowledge of the invariable relation (vyāpti) between the object perceived (hetu) and the object inferred (sādhya). The Nyāya argument takes the following form: All created or produced objects, for example, pots, have sentient beings as their makers who are aware of the material cause and purpose of creation. The universe is a created object because it is a compound of insentient parts which could not have assembled themselves. From this fact, it is inferred that the world has a creator. In brief, the Vedas are authoritative because they are derived from God who is reliable and trustworthy.[100] Shankara accepts that the world is an effect, but argues that it cannot be certified by inference that brahman is the cause. While the universe is an object of perception, brahman is not and an invariable relation (vyāpti) cannot be established between them.[101] Shankara also advances other strong arguments against the conclusions of a purely rational theology.[102] It is difficult, he contends, to explain the inequalities of creation unless we ascribe to God the possession of likes and dislikes. If in order to avert this charge, one argues that He is impelled by the merits and demerits of beings, the defect of a circular argument arises. God acts in accordance with karma and karma produces results when impelled by Him. To suggest that this mutual dependence is beginningless does not avert this difficulty. Moreover, Nyāya themselves admit that the impulse to act is an

indication of the defect of likes and dislikes. The Yoga concept of God as a special indifferent purusha does not help. Nyāya maintains that God is distinct from matter and individual souls. How then does He control them? God, matter and souls being omnipresent and partless, can neither be related by conjunction nor inherence. Those who resort to inference argue that God moulds matter (pradhāna) even as a potter with clay. But this is not possible because pradhāna is conceived of as being formless and beyond the range of perception. How is it possible to work upon such a material? We are thrown into enormous difficulties if perceptual experience is used as the basis for inferences about God. We will be forced to conclude that God possesses a body like us and is consequently subject to all of our limitations. Finally, Nyāya argues that God, matter and soul are eternal and infinite. In this case, Shankara says, God will be unable to measure the limits of all three and He ceases to be omniscient. On the other hand, if God knows the limits of all three, they cannot be infinite and will come to an end, depriving God of rulership.

Unlike the rationalists, however, the Advaitin is not constrained into dependence upon observed facts for the knowledge of God. Śruti is his source for ascertaining the nature of the cause. For this reason, he has no difficulties in accepting brahman to be both efficient and material cause, although we find no such analogy in experience. Conscious agents are not generally material causes.[103] To the argument that in conformity with experience, it is not admissible for

brahman to create without organs, Shankara rejoins,

> This supreme and sublime Brahman, is to be known from the Vedas alone, but not from reasoning. Moreover, there cannot be any such rule that since somebody is seen to have some power in some way, another should also have it in the same way. Moreover, this also has been stated that even though all distinctions are denied in Brahman, still It can have accession of all powers owing to the presence of a variety of aspects conjured up by ignorance. In support of this is the scripture, 'He moves and grasps even though he is without feet and hands, he sees without eyes and hears without ears' (Sv.U. 3.19), which shows the possession of all kinds of power by Brahman, even though It is devoid of organs.[104]

One should not conclude from the above argument that Shankara finds no use for inferential arguments about God's existence. The problem with these kinds of arguments is that they merely suggest possibilities; they are not conclusive. Once, however, the reality and nature of God are ascertained from the śruti, he attempts as far as possible to show that the conclusions of śruti conform to reason. In this attempt, he unhesitatingly uses inferential arguments and analogies.[105]

Before concluding this section of our discussion, it is necessary on the basis of our ascertained conclusions, to refute some of the widely accepted interpretations of Shankara's orientation to the authority of the Vedas.[106] Having seen that he does not try to establish authoritativeness on the basis of an inference from God's omniscience, there is no basis whatsoever for the view that śruti is acceptable to him because it embodies the records of the religious experiences of ancient mystics. The uniqueness of śruti is that its authority is not personal or derived. It is, as we have seen, apaurusheya. We cannot emphasize strongly enough the purely conjectural character

of the view that the Vedas are merely meant for inferior aspirants who are incapable of directly discovering revealed assertions, or that these assertions are discoverable through some other source. Shankara has not left this matter open to speculation and such conclusions are entirely indefensible. The overwhelming evidence of his major commentaries affirms that he saw śabda-pramāna as the only definitive source of brahmajñāna. His unambiguous justification of this pramāṇa is the impossibility of knowing brahman otherwise. The view that the Vedas "contain truths which man could, by the exercise of his own faculties discover" is entirely irreconcilable with Shankara's vindication of their authority.[107] The nature and detail of his justification of the Vedas as the only pramāṇa of brahman do not lend any support to the view that his aim was merely to seek the approval of their authority for his conclusions.

3.5 The Qualifications of Śruti and Its Relation to Smṛiti

The word smṛiti is derived from the root smṛ (to remember). It is generally used to indicate authoritative texts other than the Vedas.[108] Smṛitis are also a form of śabda-pramāṇa, but unlike the sruti, they are of human origin (paurusheya) and therefore, less authoritative. Shankara uses the analogy of perception and inference to describe the relationship between śruti and smṛiti. Smṛiti is dependent

on śruti even as inference is reliant on perception for its data. Smritis are not therefore, independently authoritative.[109] Compared to the direct and independent validity of the Vedas, the authority of smriti is remote because it "depends on some other source of knowledge and since the memory of the speaker intervenes".[110]

Smritis are authoritative only when they conform to Vedic texts. They are to be discarded in those cases where they directly contradict the sense of the Vedas. This is the method, according to Shankara, of reconciling and deciding between mutually opposed smriti texts.[111] One need not reject an entire smriti text because some parts are opposed to Vedic doctrines. Advaita, for example, shares some doctrines in common with Sāmkhya and Yoga. Although they are both dualists, Sāmkhya subscribes to the quality-less nature of the Self and Yoga emphasizes the value of detachment. Both are compatible with and acceptable to Advaita.[112] Shankara also acknowledges the authority of Kapila and his followers with respect to the nature, functions and products of the gunas.[113]

How should we view smriti texts which do not contradict Vedic ones, but for which we can find no corroboration in the Vedas? In such cases, according to Shankara, we are to infer the existence of a śruti text upon which the smriti is based.[114]

The śruti shares with all other pramāṇas, the characteristic of having a circumscribed concern and sphere of authority. As

we noted earlier, it is intended for the revelation of dharma and brahman, both of which are incapable of being known through any other pramāna. Its purpose is not to disclose matters within the range of human experience, ascertainable through any of our ordinary means of knowledge. If a śruti statement contradicts a well-established fact of our everyday experience, it cannot be considered authoritative because such a matter would be outside its authority.

> Sruti is an authority only in matters not perceived by means of ordinary instruments of knowledge such as pratyaksha or immediate perception; - i.e., it is an authority as to the mutual relation of things as means to ends, but not in matters lying within the range of pratyaksha; indeed, sruti is intended as an authority only for knowing what lies beyond the range of human knowledge...A hundred srutis may declare that fire is cold or that it is dark; still they possess no authority in the matter.115

If, however, śruti did describe fire as being cold or dark, we should construe its meaning figuratively.[116] Vedic texts are not meant for creating things anew or reversing the nature of anything. They are revelatory and are concerned with simply expressing things as they are. They do not misrepresent facts.[117] In order to accomplish its purpose, the śruti uses conventional words and meanings and cites examples from our everyday world. By these examples, "the scriptures seek to tell us about some other thing which does not contradict them. They would not cite an example from life if they wanted to convey an idea of something contradictory to it. Even if they did, it would be to no purpose, for the example would be different from the thing to be explained".[118]

As conceived by Shankara, one pramāna does not contradict

another. Each pramāṇa only reveals knowledge that cannot be obtained by another.[119] Clarification has been provided on this point by Sureśvara.[120] According to him, two pramāṇas, whose spheres are entirely different, cannot be contradictory. The eyes which perceive forms and the ears which apprehend sounds are not opposed. It is only when two pramāṇas deal with the same object and are contradictory that they are opposed.

> If a thing is perceived by the senses it cannot be revealed by the Veda; if a thing is genuinely revealed by the Veda it cannot be an object of sense-perception. A perception (purporting to bear on a revealed subject is only) a semblance of a perception; and a revealed text (bearing on what is subject to perception is only) a mere semblance of a revelation.121

Sureśvara goes on to add that pramāṇas do not have to co-operate with each other to produce knowledge as the various members of a syllogism do. Each is authoritative within its own sphere and independently capable of giving rise to valid knowledge.

In Shankara's view then, the knowledge of the Vedas is not opposed to fact. He denies, for example, that there is any conflict between śruti and perception with regard to the nature of the Self. The claim of the śruti that the Self is free from all limitations is not opposed to our perceptual experience. The latter has for its object the Self as identified with various limiting adjuncts (upādhis). Śruti, however, points to a Self free from all erroneous identification.[122] Similarly, Shankara denies that there is any contradiction between perception and the unity of brahman.[123] We should remind ourselves, however, of

Shankara's position that not everything revealed by śruti is explicable on the analogy of our everyday experience. The nature of brahman as both efficient and material cause cannot be inferred from any of our experiences of creation.[124] If, after the meaning of a śruti text is well ascertained, a conflict arises with any other pramāṇa, śruti must be accorded primacy.[125]

Shankara mentions some very specific topics which it is not the function of the śruti to reveal. It is not the purpose of the śruti to inform us of the details and order of the creation of the world. We neither observe, nor are we told by the texts, that the welfare of man depends upon this kind of knowledge. In fact, when the texts are properly analysed, we find that such passages are intended for instruction about brahman. They are not independent passages, but are subservient and linked to those discussing brahman. Accounts of creation, which involve analogies of clay, iron, sparks etc., are only meant for showing the non-difference of effects from cause and upholding the unity of brahman.[126]

Similarly, śruti is not concerned to provide information about the individual self (jīvātman).

> The individual soul, present in everybody as the agent and experiencer in association with such limiting adjuncts as the intellect, is known from common experience itself, and so it is not mentioned in the Upanisads for its own sake. But as God is not thus familarly known from common experience, He is intended to be declared in the Upanisad for His own sake. Hence it is not proper to say that any mention of Him is uncalled for.[127]

Finally, not only is śruti limited with reference to its content, but its injunctions have a limited applicability. The one who has gained brahmajñāna stands outside the pale of injunctions. Directives to act or to refrain from action are relevant to one who is in search of appropriate means for gaining some desirable object or avoiding an undesirable one. Injunctions somehow appear superfluous to the brahmajñānī who has no unfulfilled personal wants.

> That man, verily, who rejoices only in the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, who is content in the Self alone, - for him there is nothing to do.
>
> For him, there is here no interest whatever in what is done or what is not done. Nor is there in all beings any one he should resort to for any object.128

The point seems to be that the brahmajñānī, having shed self-centred wants, spontaneously becomes a source and example of right action. The directives which aim at bringing about this effortless ideal are redundant once it is discovered. It is śruti's own tribute to her ideal. As Shankara remarks,

> If a man who has realised the identity of the Self and Brahman has still to bow down to injunctions, even though he is beyond all mandates, then there will remain none who is outside the pale of scriptural direction; and so all actions will become fit to be undertaken by all and sundry at all times. But that is undesirable. Nor can he be directed by anybody, for even the scriptures emanate from him. Not that anyone can be impelled by any sentence issuing out of his own wisdom. Nor is a well-informed master commanded by an ignorant servant.129

The conclusions we have reached in this discussion about Shankara's understanding of the nature of the authority of the śruti differ radically from some of the opinions we have summarized in Chapter 1. We terminate our discussion here by briefly reflecting on these.

It is indisputable that there is a profound epistemological basis for Shankara's dependence on śruti as the only authoritative source of brahmajñāna. There is no dearth of evidence to support the view that he saw the śruti as the only valid source of this knowledge. His way of justifying the necessity for a pramāṇa in the form of words completely belies the argument that his recourse to śruti was motivated merely by the wish to gain the support of an authoritative tradition for his personal views. Śabda-pramāṇa, contrary to the view of current opinion, is perceived by him as a unique source of knowledge about brahman, justified by the fact that, as human beings, we cannot otherwise know brahman. Śruti would not satisfy the criterion of novelty if the knowledge which it provides could be obtained from any other source. We have also highlighted his argument that the śruti, like all other valid sources of knowledge, does not need the confirmation or verification of any other pramāṇa. It is a self-valid source of fruitful knowledge.

We have not found any evidence in the commentaries of Shankara to support the conclusion that he accepted the śruti as authoritative and infallible because it embodied the self-certifying experiences of ancient mystics. The grounds of his argument for śruti's infallibility are very different. When Shankara does not even seek to establish the authority of the śruti on the basis of īśvara's omniscience, it is difficult to conceive that he would derive it from human authority. In this matter, his views are closely allied with those of Pūrva-Mīmāṇsā. We have noted the connection between his arguments for the uncreated, eternal

and impersonal (apaurusheya) nature of the śruti, and its infallibility.

While Shankara advances various arguments for the validity of the śruti, it appears to us that he ultimately falls back upon the claim that the śruti fulfils the criteria of being a pramāna. It provides a knowledge which is not available through any other source, and which is not contradicted by another valid pramāṇa. In addition, this knowledge is seen to be fruitful in the elimination of saṃsāra, and its attendant evils such as grief, fear and delusion. It would seem that the onus is rather thrust upon the one who does not accept śruti as a pramāṇa to disprove its validity.

Having thus examined Shankara's understanding of the status and justification of śruti as a pramāṇa of brahman, we can now consider how he sees brahmajñāna as unfolded through this medium.

CHAPTER 4

THE METHOD OF ŚABDA-PRAMĀṆA AS MEDIUM OF BRAHMAJÑĀNA

In the last chapter, we discussed Shankara's conception of the Vedas and sought to establish his evident conclusion that the Vedas are our only authoritative means for the knowledge of brahman. We also attempted to unfold the rationale underlying this view. In brief, his argument is that because brahman possesses no characteristics or distinguishing marks which can be apprehended by any of our ordinary means of knowledge, It can be known only through śabda-pramāṇa

The case for śabda-pramāṇa in Shankara, however, cannot end there. If brahman, by definition, excludes the applicability of all other sources of knowledge, It also poses special difficulties for śabda-pramāṇa. There is clear evidence in Shankara's commentaries of his acute awareness of these problems. Śabda-pramāṇa is a means of knowledge in the form of words and the words of the Vedas are the conventional words of everyday usage.[1] If the words employed by the Vedas are unfamiliar, the texts become useless as a pramāṇa.[2] The problem, however, is that conventional words and meanings are employed in designating known and

familiar objects. When employed in the śruti, they must serve as the medium of informing us about an unknown entity (brahman) which possesses none of the distinguishing marks of ordinary objects. A language which is conditioned by the world of objects which it describes, must somehow define a unique and entirely dissimilar entity. Words, according to Shankara, can define their objects in four ways. They do this through categories denoting genus, action, quality or relation. Words such as "horse" and "cow" imply genus, "cook" and "teacher" suggest action, "white" and "black" indicate qualities, and "wealthy" or "cattleowner" point to a relation or possession. Brahman, however, belongs to no genus. It is devoid of qualities (nirguṇa), actionless and not related to anything.[3]

It seems obvious therefore, that if conventional words are to be employed in informing us accurately of brahman, they will have to be employed in a very special manner, as part of a unique method of instruction. The feasibility of śabda-pramāṇa as a vehicle of brahmajñāna becomes credible only when some method can be demonstrated for overcoming the natural limitations of language. This is a difficulty which also partly explains the attempt to suggest an alternative to śabda-pramāṇa in Shankara, and it is important therefore, that we examine his treatment of this problem. We can do this more effectively, however, by first examining the precise problem which śabda-pramāṇa aims to resolve. Its adequacy or inadequacy can only be assessed in relation to this problem.

4.1 The Fundamental Problem of Avidyā and its Resolution

The Vedas, according to Shankara, do not reveal the ātman in the sense of illumining Its existence. Being of the nature of Consciousness (cit), ātman is self-revealing. It is absolute Awareness in whose light everything stands revealed.

> There the sun does not shine, neither do the moon and the stars; nor do these flashes of lightning shine. How can this fire? He shining, all these shine; through His lustre all these are variously illumined.4

There are several important and interesting discussions in Shankara's commentaries which are relevant to this issue. In his introduction to the Brahma-sūtra, an objection is raised against the superimposition (adhyāsa) argument.[5] The objector's view is that superimposition is possible only on something that is available for sense perception. In the mistaken apprehension of the rope for a snake, for example, the form of the snake is seen. How can anything, however, be superimposed on the ātman which is not an object of the senses? Shankara's reply is to suggest that even though the Self is not an object of perception, It is not entirely unknown and adhyāsa is possible.

> The Self is not absolutely beyond apprehension, because It is apprehended as the content of the concept "I"; and because the Self, opposed to the non-Self, is well known in the world as an immediately perceived (i.e. self-revealing) entity. Nor is there any rule that something has to be superimposed on something else that is directly perceived through the senses; for boys superimpose the ideas of surface (i.e. concavity) and dirt on the space (i.e. sky) that is not an object of sense perception. Hence there is nothing impossible in superimposing the non-Self on the Self that is opposed to it.6

Elsewhere, the objector asks whether brahman is known or unknown.[7] The point of the query here is that if brahman is known, there is no need for a means of knowledge or an inquiry to ascertain Its nature. If, on the other hand, brahman is entirely unknown (i.e. not even the object of a desire to know), It cannot become the subject of any kind of inquiry (jijñāsā). Shankara, however, denies that brahman is entirely unknown.

> Besides, the existence of Brahman is well known from the fact of Its being the Self of all; for everyone feels that his Self exists, and he never feels, 'I do not exist'. Had there been no general recognition of the existence of the Self, everyone would have felt, 'I do not exist'. And that Self is Brahman.8

If the ātman is known, is not inquiry into the śruti redundant?

> No, for there is a conflict about Its distinctive nature. Ordinary people as well as the materialists of the Lokāyata school recognise the body alone to be the Self possessed of sentience. Others hold that the mind is the Self. Some say that it is merely momentary consciousness. Others say that it is a void. Still others believe that there is a soul, separate from the body, which transmigrates and is the agent (of work) and the experiencer (of results). Some say that the soul is a mere experiencer and not an agent. Some say that there is a God who is different from this soul and is all-knowing and all-powerful; others say that He is the Self of the experiencing individual. Thus there are many who follow opposite views by depending on logic, texts and their semblances. If one accepts any of these views without examination, one is liable to be deflected from emancipation and come to grief. Therefore, starting with the presentation of a deliberation on Brahman, here is commenced an ascertainment of the meaning of the texts of the Upanisads with the help of reasoning not opposed to the Upanisads themselves, for the purpose of leading to emancipation (through knowledge).9

Shankara's reference to the absence of distinctive or particular knowledge (viśesha-jñāna) suggests that the kind of knowledge of the ātman which we possess is of a general

nature only (sāmānya-jñāna). In fact, superimposition occurs where knowledge is of a general nature and lacks specificity. In the rope-snake analogy, an object is perceived as existing, but its particular (viśesha) nature is incorrectly ascertained. The qualities of a snake are then attributed to the rope. In the case of the ātman, that "I exist" and "I know" are self-revelatory. This knowledge, however, is of a general (sāmānya) nature only. Upon this Existence (sat) and Awareness (cit), mortality and finitude are superimposed. That one exists in all three periods of time is unknown. Bliss (ānanda) is manifest in various experiences, but its identity with the Self is not known. It is generally understood to be a quality of sense objects. Where the ātman is concerned therefore, the problem is a lack of viśesha-jñāna, and this makes superimposition possible. The result is the ascription of the qualities of the non-Self upon the Self. If the ātman is fully known or entirely unknown, It cannot become the locus of any kind of superimposition. It is clear therefore, that from Shankara's standpoint, the problem does not involve the knowledge of an entirely unknown, unrevealed or remote Self. It is one of incomplete or erroneous knowledge of an ever-available and self-manifesting ātman.

Shankara introduces his commentary on the Brahma-sūtra by arguing that the Self (Subject) and the non-Self (object) are so radically different from each other that identity between them is impossible. Nevertheless, he says, owing to the absence of discrimination, their natures and attributes are mutually confused and superimposed.[10] He concludes his introduction by illustrating the forms which this

transposition takes.

> One superimposes the characteristics of the body when one has such ideas as 'I am fat', 'I am thin', 'I am fair', 'I stay', 'I go', or 'I scale'. So also one superimposes the attributes of the senses and organs when one thinks, 'I am dumb', 'I am deaf', or 'I am blind'... Similarly one superimposes the attributes of the internal organ, such as desire, will, doubt, perseverance, etc. In the same way, one first superimposes the internal organ, possessed of the idea of ego, on the Self, the witness of all the manifestations of that organ; then by an opposite process, one superimposes on the internal organ etc. that Self which is opposed to the non-Self and which is the witness of everything.11

The function of the śruti in this context lies primarily in the negation of attributes imposed through avidyā on the Self. The śruti does not reveal an unknown entity.[12] One of the most important reasons for emphasizing the immediate availability of the Self and clarifying the nature of avidyā pertaining to It is that it establishes the possibility of śabda-pramāna giving rise to immediate and direct knowledge. It is very simple when words like "search", "quest", "achieving", "accomplishing" and "attaining" are used, to think of the object of inquiry as being remote and immediately unavailable. In fact, from the perspective of Advaita, the seeker's difficulty arises from not having appreciated himself to be the object of all quests. He is himself the ever-available sought. The challenge is not one of creating anything new, but of erroneous understanding of himself. In fact, if the Self to be known is not always available and manifest, the implication would be that It is somehow limited.

It is extremely significant that Shankara opens his commentary on the Brahma-sūtra with an introduction on superimposition. It is necessary to posit superimposition

(adhyāsa) before non-duality and liberation (moksha) can be established. Since adhyāsa is a product of avidyā, it can be negated by jñāna. It is as absurd to employ any other means, as it is to use a stick for protecting oneself against the snake perceived in place of the rope. Shankara's emphasis on jñāna as the only direct means to moksha has to be understood in the light of his definition of bondage. His standpoint is that if bondage is real (i.e. existing in all three periods of time without change), it cannot be eliminated by jñāna or indeed by any other means. If it is entirely non-existent, for example, like the son of a barren woman, there is no need for any means to bring about freedom. An apparent bondage, however, with its basis in incomplete and erroneous knowledge, can be overcome by jñāna born out of śabda-pramāṇa.

This is the true context also, in which his refutation of action (karma) as a direct means to moksha has to be placed.[13] Karma becomes a direct means where the attainment involved is one of accomplishing something not yet accomplished. If one admits, Shankara contends, that moksha is to be effected through karma, then the action necessary, whether physical, mental or vocal, should be any one of four kinds.[14] These are creation, modification, attainment, and purification. If, however, moksha is regarded as the product of an act of creation (e.g. like the creation of a pot from clay) or modification (e.g. milk into curds), it becomes finite and non-eternal. The result of any action is conditioned by the nature of the act, and

action is always finite and limited. In any event, brahman is an already existing entity, and beyond all change. Is brahman an already existing entity, but separate from the individual (jīva)? Can we consider moksha to be the result of an act of attainment or reaching? Brahman, being the very nature of one's Self, there is no question of Its accomplishment through an act of reaching or any movement.

> Even if Brahman be different from oneself, there can be no acquisition, for Brahman being all-pervasive like space, It remains ever attained by everybody.15

Is it possible to view moksha as the result of an act of purification? The latter, Shankara points out, can be effected either by the addition of some excellence to what is to be purified or by the removal of some blemish. Moksha, however, is of the nature of brahman to which no excellence can be added.[16] Brahman is, by definition, eternally pure and there is no question of the removal of any blemish from It. A final possibility is envisaged and refuted by Shankara.

> Objection: May it not be, that though liberation is inherent in oneself, it remains covered and it becomes manifest when the Self is purified by action, as the brilliance of a mirror does when cleaned by the act of rubbing?
>
> Vedāntin: No, since the Self cannot reasonably be the sphere of any action, for no action can take place without bringing about some change in its locus. But if the Self changes through action, It will be subject to impermanence and that will militate against such texts as, 'It is said to be immutable' (B.G.2:25)... Hence the Self can have no action occurring on Itself. And action, taking place on something else, cannot purify the Self which is not an object thereof.17

If action is the appropriate mode for realising the accomplishment of the unaccomplished, jñāna is adequate for

the accomplishment of the already accomplished. The accomplishment of the accomplished is a paradoxical description, but it is quite clear from Shankara's metaphysics that he conceives moksha to be an attainment of this kind. Such an attainment is involved where the loss is entirely notional or apparent and the gain is in the form of knowledge.

Shankara uses a number of illustrations to describe a problem of this kind and its solution. The story of the tenth man has become a classic parable of Advaita and its implications have been contemplated in detail.[18] Ten disciples were on their way to a pilgrimage site, when they encountered a river in flood. In the absence of the boat-man, they decided to swim across. On reaching the opposite shore, the leader took a count to ensure that everyone was safe. To his dismay, one seemed to be missing. Every other member of the group did likewise, but ended up with the same result. They were all deeply grieved after concluding that the tenth man had drowned. A passer-by, who was attracted by their loud lamentations, inquired about the problem. After patiently listening and observing, he assured them that the tenth man was indeed available and requested the leader to count again. When the disciple stopped at nine and looked bewildered, the stranger smilingly said, "You are the tenth man". The error was immediately appreciated by everyone. Each had omitted himself from his count! The already accomplished and immediately available tenth man is denied in avidyā and again accomplished in jñāna. Similarly, the limitless, which is the object of the seeker's quest, is not different

from his own ever accomplished, always shining, Self. Being unaware of this, he assumes the guise of finitude and like the tenth man is subject to all its attendant sorrows. Śruti frees him by pointing out the identity of the seeker and sought. Śruti is like a mirror in which he sees his true image.[19]

> The attainment of the Self cannot be, as in the case of things other than It, the obtaining of something not obtained before, for here there is no difference between the person attaining and the object attained. Where the Self has to obtain something other than Itself, the Self is the attainer and the non-Self is the object attained. This, not being already attained, is separated by acts such as producing, and is to be attained by the initiation of a particular action with the help of auxiliaries. And the attainment of something new is transitory, being due to desire and action that are themselves the product of a false notion, like the birth of a son etc. in a dream. But this Self is the very opposite of that. By the very fact of Its being the Self, It is not separated by acts such as producing. But although It is always attained, It is separated by ignorance only.20

4.2 The Independent Authoritativeness of the Vedānta Sentences

The aim of the previous section was to establish Shankara's conception of the nature of avidyā as it relates to the ātman, and its appropriate resolution. The function of the śruti does not lie in establishing or revealing the existence of the ātman, but in removing ignorance and in negating the attributes and qualities which are erroneously ascribed to an ever-manifest, but imperfectly known Self. One may say that the problem is not a lack of experience of ātman,

but one of incorrect knowledge. Someone, for example, searching for a certain Mr. Smith, encounters a stranger and has a lengthy conversation with him. At the end of the exchange, he inquires about Mr. Smith, and the stranger declares, "I am Smith". One may say that prior to this revelation, the seeker had the experience of Smith, but lacked knowledge. Similarly, ātman as sat (Existence), cit (Awareness) and ānanda (Bliss) is not completely unknown, but erroneously understood. We also sought to understand the notional nature of bondage, and the rationale of Shankara's conclusion that jñāna is the only direct means to freedom.

We must now consider some relevant aspects of his exegesis of the Vedic texts. His exegetical position was developed, in a large measure, in response to the interpretations of Pūrva-Mīmānsā. Although some of the issues and arguments appear archaic, we can examine those still important arguments which shed further light on his conception of the nature of jñāna and the role of śruti as a pramāṇa.

In brief, the Mīmānsā exegesis, in so far as it is relevant to Shankara, contends that the Vedas have their purport only in the inculcation of dharma.[21] The latter is defined by Jaimini as, "that which, being desirable, is indicated by Vedic injunction".[22] On the basis of this view, Pūrva-Mīmānsā argues that only injunctions (vidhi) inculcating the performance of acceptable acts, and prohibitions (nishedha) instituting restraint from acts opposed to dharma, are direct and independent in authority.[23] The

authority of all other texts is indirect and dependent for their meaningfulness on a connection with the injunctions. They are not viewed as having any independent end in themselves. Many Vedic texts, for example, including Vedānta sentences (Vedānta-vākyas), are seen as having their purposefulness only in praising what has been enjoined in the injunctions.[24] Pūrva-Mīmānsā argues that if such sentences are taken by themselves, they are absolutely meaningless because they neither impel us to activity or restrain us from a prohibited action.[25] Their view is that the Vedānta-vākyas are merely an appendage to the main body of injunctive statements. Their utility lies only in praising the prescribed action or in providing some useful information such as knowledge of the deity or agent for the performance of a particular rite. If they are statements about already accomplished entities, then they are without fruit, for they neither prompt the performance of dharma nor the avoidance of adharma. Against the independent authority of the Vedānta-vākyas, Pūrva-Mīmānsā contends that knowledge about already accomplished things is obtainable from other pramānas. The knowledge of dharma and adharma, however, is not otherwise obtainable.[26]

This Mīmānsā exegesis is obviously incompatible with Shankara's justification of the role of the Vedas. It is irreconcilable with his view that the Upanishads are an independent pramāna for brahman. He seeks therefore, to refute, from various standpoints, the Mīmānsā thesis, and to establish that the Vedānta-vākyas are not subservient to any other texts, but have an independent meaningfulness

and authority in the revelation of brahman.

Shankara does not accept that sentences cannot have a factual referent or significance.[27] He points out that even though a sentence might have its ultimate purport in initiating some activity, it does not necessarily cease to communicate valid factual information. Even as a man travelling to some destination perceives the existence of leaves and grass at the side of the road, a statement might have its aim in activity, but its factual content is not thereby invalidated.[28] In response to the Mīmānsā exaltation of injunctions, Shankara reminds them that injunctions are valid not simply because they are injunctions, but because they are revealed in an authoritative pramāṇa, the Vedas.

> When a thing has been known to be true from the Vedas, a person will perform it, should it admit of being performed, but will not do it if it is not a thing to be done.29

Another proposition of Mīmānsā is that if Vedic statements are understood to independently signify already existent things, they become redundant. Existent things are knowable through ordinary sources of knowledge. While agreeing that most existent things can be so known, Shankara contends that brahman is unique. Possessing no characteristics apprehensible through any other pramāṇa, it can be cognized through śabda-pramāṇa alone. Its existence cannot be denied just because Its nature precludes all other sources of knowledge.[30]

In reply to the claim that mere factual statements which neither persuade us into activity nor dissuade us from it are

fruitless, Shankara asserts that, "the test of the authority or otherwise of a passage is not whether it states a fact or an action, but its capacity to generate certain and fruitful knowledge. A passage that has this is authoritative and one that lacks it is not".[31] He never tires of continuously affirming the independent fruitfulness of the Vedānta-vākyas. Even as a simple statement of fact, "This is a rope, not a snake", is fruitful in removing the fear occasioned by the error of taking a rope for a snake, Vedānta-vākyas, by helping to discriminate the Self from the non-Self, release us from the sorrow of taking ourselves to be incomplete and finite beings.[32] It contravenes experience to maintain that brahmajñāna is unproductive because knowledge brings about no change in the life of someone who knows brahman.

> For one who has realised the state of the unity of the Self and Brahman, it cannot be proved that his mundane life continues just as before; for this contradicts the knowledge of the unity of Brahman and the Self arising from the Vedas which are a valid means of knowledge. From noticing the fact that a man can have sorrow, fear, etc. as a result of identifying himself with the body etc., it does not follow that this very man will have sorrow etc. contingent on false ignorance, even when his self-identification with the body etc. ceases after the realization of the unity of Brahman and the Self, arising from the Vedas which are a valid source of knowledge. Just because a householder, who had been rich and prided himself on that account, had been seen to be sorrowing for the theft of his wealth, it does not follow that this very man will be miserable for any loss of that wealth even after he has become a monk and given up the idea of being wealthy.33

Besides, Shankara states, if one contends that only statements prompting activity are meaningful, Vedic prohibition (nishedha) will be deprived of all authority. A sentence such as, "A Brāhmaṇa should not be killed", is neither directly nor

indirectly connected with any action. It is the aim of a nishedha to influence us to desist from a particular action.[34] Finally, our attention is drawn to the contradiction involved in asserting that the Vedānta-vākyas are subsidiary to the injunctive texts. Vedānta texts, which proclaim the reality of the non-dual brahman, deny the absolute truth of the duality of agent, instrument and result implied in activity. In the light of such a clear repudiation of duality, it is impossible to maintain that they can in any way subserve injunctions.[35]

From a hermeneutical point of view, the most important basis for Shankara's affirmation that Vedānta-vākyas are independently authoritative and fruitful is his contention that by right correlation (samanvaya), it can be shown that these sentences have their purport (tātparya) only in the revelation of brahman.

> Besides, when the words in the Upaniṣadic sentences become fully ascertained as but revealing the nature of Brahman, it is not proper to fancy some other meaning; for that will result in rejecting something established by the Vedas and accepting some other thing not intended by them.36

In order to discover the purport of any scriptural passage, Advaita makes use of the sixfold criteria (shadliṅga) formulated by Pūrva-Mīmānsā exegetists.[37] These very important exegetical canons are as follows:

1. Upakramopasaṃhārau (the beginning and the end).

This means the presentation at the beginning as well as the end, of the subject matter treated in a particular section. A unity of the initial and concluding passages is considered to be a good indication of the intention of

the śruti. For example, CH.U. 6.2.1, begins with the text, "In the beginning, my dear, this was being only, One without a second". The section ends (6.16.3), "All this is identical with That; That is the Self; That Thou Art, O Shvētakētu".

2. Abhyāsa (repetition). The purport of the śruti is also suggested by the frequent repetition of a theme in the course of a discussion. In CH.U. 6, the sentence, "That Thou Art", is uttered nine times.

3. Apūrva (novelty). The idea here is that if the subject under discussion is knowable through other pramāṇas, it cannot be the purport of śruti. As a pramāṇa, the main function of śruti is to inform us of things which are inaccessible through any other means of knowledge. Brahman is considered to be a subject unknowable through any means but the Vedas.

4. Phala (fruit). The purport of a passage is also indicated by the clear mention of an independent result. The fruitfulness of the Vedānta-vākyas is an argument which Shankara returns to again and again. CH.U. 6.14.2, mentions moksha as the phala of brahmajñāna. In other words, if in a particular passage there is an unambiguous mention of its own independent fruit, such a passage cannot be seen as being merely subservient to some other parts of the text. A distinct result gives a good indication of a different purport. By arguing that there is a clear mention of a different end in the jñānakānda

(i.e. moksha), Shankara distinguishes its purport from the karmakāṇḍa section of the Vedas.

5. Arthavāda (commendation). This is the praise of the subject matter in the course of the discussion. "Have you ever asked for that instruction by which one hears what has not been heard, one thinks what has not been thought, one knows what has not been known"? (CH.U. 6.1.3), is seen as a praise of brahmajñāna.

6. Upapatti (demonstration). This indicates the use of arguments to suggest the reasonableness of the subject presented. CH.U. 6.1.4-6 uses a variety of illustrations to demonstrate the non-difference of cause and effect and to explain brahman as the material cause of the universe.[38]

Advaita contends that by the application of the shaḍliṅga it can be proved that the Vedānta-vākyas are not ancillary to any other texts, but have an independent purport (tātparya) in revealing the non-dual brahman.

Shankara's refutation of the Mīmānsā exegesis of the significance of the Vedānta-vākyas highlights and reinforces salient features of his own outlook. It underlines the nature of brahman as an ever-available entity and emphasizes the role of Vedānta-vākyas in producing fruitful knowledge of an existent thing. That brahman is existent does not at all imply Its attainability through other pramāṇas. Brahmajñāna is fully revelatory in character, for it does

not accomplish its end by instigating engagement in any activity. Like the case of the tenth man, śabda-pramāṇa can produce fruitful results where the problem involved is a mistaken notion of an existent reality.

Having highlighted Shankara's arguments for the autonomy of the Vedānta-vākyas, we can conclude by summing up his conception of the subject matter and purport of the Vedas as a whole. The first section (karmakāṇḍa) informs us of approved means for attaining desirable but yet unaccomplished ends.[39] The second section (jñānakāṇḍa) constitutes the Upanishads and informs us of the nature of brahman.[40] The two sections are clearly distinguishable from each other in four ways:[41]

1. Vishaya (subject matter). Karmakāṇḍa is concerned with the revelation of dharma, while the jnānakāṇḍa has brahman as its subject.

2. Adhikārī (aspirant). The aspirant after the ends of the karmakāṇḍa is one who has not yet grown to understand the limitations of any result achievable by karma. The adhikārī of the jñānakāṇḍa has appreciated the non-eternity of karma-accomplished ends, and seeks an unaccomplished limitless end.[42]

3. Phala (result). The karmakāṇḍa has prosperity as its result. The result of the jñānakāṇḍa is moksha.[43]

4. Sambandha (connection). The knowledge which is revealed in the karmakāṇḍa informs us of an end which is not yet existent. Its actualization depends upon being effected by an appropriate action. Knowledge here is not an end in itself. The jñānakāṇḍa, on the other hand, reveals an already existent brahman. Brahmajñāna is an end in itself. The connection here is between a revealed object and a means of revelation. Jñānakāṇḍa fulfils itself in its informative role, while the karmakāṇḍa impels us into activity.

Shankara makes frequent reference in his bhāshya to the criticism that the non-dual brahman of the jñānakāṇḍa renders invalid the entire karmakāṇḍa with its dualistic presuppositions. His general response is that the śruti is realistic and practical in its awareness of the human condition and provides solutions which are appropriate to man's needs and demands. Śruti does not, he points out, instruct us at birth about the duality or unity of existence, and then about rites or the knowledge of brahman. In fact, he says, the notion of duality does not have to be instructed. It is initially accepted as naturally true by all of us. The scripture, he argues, in full awareness of this fact and in recognition of the multifarious desires in men, prescribes, in the karmakāṇḍa, appropriate rites for securing these ends.[44] In doing this, the śruti does not comment on the reality or otherwise of these actions.

> Moreover, actions, their factors and their results are things we naturally believe in: they are the creation of ignorance. When, through their help, a

> man who desires to gain something good or to avoid something evil, proceeds to adopt a means of which he has only a vague, not definite idea, the Śruti simply tells him about that; it says nothing either for or against the truth of the diversity of actions, their factors and their results - which people have already taken for granted. For the Śruti only prescribes means for the attainment of desired ends and the avoidance of untoward results.45

Śruti stands helplessly in her confrontation with insatiable human desires. To exercise forceful restraint is utterly futile. She simply instructs in accordance with capacity. Shankara explains the stance of the śruti in one of his clearest statements on this issue.

> People have innumerable desires and various defects, such as attachment. Therefore they are lured by the attachment etc. to external objects, and the scriptures are powerless to hold them back; nor can they persuade those who are naturally averse to external objects to go after them. But the scriptures do this much that they point out what leads to good and what to evil, thereby indicating the particular relations that subsist between ends and means; just as a lamp, for instance, helps to reveal forms in the dark. But the scriptures neither hinder nor direct a person by force, as if he were a slave. We see how people disobey even the scriptures because of an excess of attachment etc. Therefore, according to the varying tendencies of people, the scriptures variously teach the particular relations that subsist between ends and means. In this matter people themselves adopt particular means according to their tastes, and the scriptures simply remain neutral, like the sun, for instance, or a lamp. Similarly, somebody may think the highest goal to be not worth striving after. One chooses one's goal according to one's knowledge, and wants to adopt corresponding means.46

When, however, an individual appreciates the limited nature of all the results that he can possibly achieve through karma and seeks the enduring factor of existence, śruti imparts brahmajñāna. It is only for this person that the validity of duality, presupposed in the karmakāṇḍa, is negated.[47] Therefore, Shankara concludes, the texts that teach the unity of brahman are not antagonistic to those

enjoining rituals. Nor do the ritualistic texts deprive the Upanishads of authority. Each is authoritative in its own sphere.[48]

4.3. The Distinctive Method of Word Manipulation as Mode of Instruction

We have already emphasized the need for cautious approach to Shankara's explanation of śruti statements treating the unknowability of brahman and discussed the chief ways in which he reads such passages.[49] That brahman is knowable and that śabda-pramāṇa is the only vehicle of this knowledge are the unmistakable conclusions of his bhāshya. In his altercation with Pūrva-Mīmānsā, we have seen his labour to argue the independent significance and efficacy of the Vedānta-vākyas. The task of such statements is not to demonstrate brahman's existence but to correct and complete our muddled and partial understanding.

As an entity which has to be defined by a pramāṇa in the form of words, brahman presents unique difficulties. It possesses none of the characteristics of genus, quality, relation and activity, through which words are normally able to describe a subject. Therefore, along with his emphasis on the possibility of brahmajñāna, Shankara also draws attention to a traditional method of instruction. With all of their limitations, there is no means of evading

the use of words, since they constitute the very nature of the indispensable pramāṇa. If limited words are to discard their finite references and reveal the infinite, they must be skilfully and deliberately wielded. It is this necessity for skilful instruction which explains the Advaita conception of the role and qualifications of the traditional teacher. There is no lack of emphasis in Shankara on the imperative of the guru. "Brahman", he says, "can only be known through such a traditional instruction of perceptors and not through argumentation, nor by study (or exposition), intelligence, great learning, austerity, sacrifices, etc."[50] Shankara describes such a teacher as a rare one among many.[51] In the Chāndogya Upanishad, the certain acquisition of knowledge by the person fortunate to have a teacher is described in an illustration, which is often cited by Shankara.

> Just as, my dear, some one, having brought a man from the Gandhāra regions with his eyes bound up, might leave him in a desolate place, - and that man would shout towards the East, or towards the North, or towards the South, or towards the West - 'I have been brought here with my eyes bound up and left here with my eyes bound up'.
>
> And as someone might remove his bandages and tell him - the Gandhāra regions lie towards this direction, go in this direction, - whereupon, asking his way from village to village, and becoming informed and capable of judging for himself, he would reach the Gandhāra regions; - in the same manner, in this world, that person knows who has a teacher; and for him the delay is only so long as I am not liberated and become merged.52

The qualified teacher is one who has thoroughly mastered the śruti (śrotriyam) and who abides in brahmajñāna (brahmanishtham).[53] Such a teacher should be reverentially approached and is under an obligation to instruct the well-qualified student (śishya).

> To him who approaches duly, whose heart is calm and whose outer organs are under control, that man of enlightenment should adequately impart that knowledge of Brahman by which one realises the true and immutable Puruṣa.54

The skilful teacher instructs in accordance with the receptivity of the student and his capacity for assimilation. The method of teaching is referred to in Advaita as, arundhatī-darśana-nyāya (the method of indicating arundhatī). Arundhatī, a very small star, is difficult to perceive. In order to point it out, a proximate, larger star is indicated as arundhatī. This large star is dismissed when it is seen and arundhatī is then shown.[55] The aim of imparting brahmajñāna is accomplished by a combination of several approaches. Only for the sake of convenience can we try to distinguish between them. In śruti and in the actual teaching process, they are employed together and presuppose each other.

(I). The Method of Adhyāropa (Superimposition) and Apavāda (De-Superimposition)

One of the finest examples of this method of instruction is to be found in the Bhagavadgītā, Chapter 13:12-14.[56] We can understand Shankara's conception of the nature of this process of instruction, by following his bhāshya on these verses.

> That which has to be known I shall describe; knowing which one attains the Immortal. Beginningless is the Supreme Brahman. It is not said to be 'sat' or 'asat'.57

Shankara advances two reasons for not accepting that the Bhagavadgītā's description of brahman as neither sat (existent) nor asat (non-existent) is contradictory.[58] His argument here is that only something which can be perceived by the senses can be an object of consciousness accompanied by the idea of existence or non-existence.[59] Brahman is beyond all sense apprehension and is knowable through śabda-pramāṇa alone. In addition to this, no word can define brahman which lacks all characteristics (viz. genus, quality, action, relation) denoted by words. This assertion, however, Shankara says, that brahman is not definable by the word, sat, may lead one to the unacceptable conclusion that brahman has no reality. The next verse averts this by attributing to It the organs of a living being.

> With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and heads and mouths everywhere, with hearing everywhere, That exists enveloping all.60

The superimposition (adhyāropa) of sense organs and organs of action on brahman is a purely pedagogic device for indicating Its existence. In reality all such attributions (upādhis) are false. Once Its existence is indicated, the apavāda immediately follows in the next verse.

> Shining by the functions of all the sense organs, yet without the senses; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities, yet enjoying qualities.61

This paradoxical method of adhyāropa and apavāda is one way by which the finite limitations of language can to some extent be overcome to indicate brahman. The śruti abounds with examples of this kind of verbal juxtaposition.[62] The adhyāropa-apavāda procedure is a unique method of indicating the immanent and transcendent aspects of brahman. Adhyāropa

definitions are possible because the entire universe is dependent on brahman and nothing is apart from It. In the actual process of instruction, initial attention must necessarily be drawn to brahman through Its association with the world and the individual.[63]

> That from which all these beings take birth, that by which they live after being born, that towards which they move and into which they merge. That is Brahman.64
>
> That which man does not comprehend with the mind, that by which, they say, the mind is encompassed, know that to be Brahman and not what people worship as an object.65

Definitions of the first kind reveal the world's dependence on and identity with brahman, by presenting the latter as both its material and efficient cause.[66] Definitions of the second type reveal brahman as the ātman. Brahman is indicated as the Self through Its nature as illumining Awareness (caitanya) in relation to the body, sense organs and mind. They serve as the indicators through which brahman can be pointed out, even as one points out the star arundhatī. When these aspects of brahman are fully grasped by the student, then all false attributions (upādhis) must be negated because of their finite implications and because of the nonessential nature of the characteristics associated with brahman. Having accomplished their purposes, these definitions are withdrawn and apavāda negates from brahman all anthropomorphic semblances. Both procedures are complementary and indispensable. Language is employed by revealing its limitations.

(II). The Method of Negation, (Neti, Neti)

The method of pure negation is another means by which words can be detached from their primary limited denotations. Purely negative definitions of brahman are intended to distinguish It from the known and limited referents of all words. Such negative descriptions are exceedingly common in the Upanishads.

> The wise realise everywhere that which is invisible (adriśya), ungraspable (agrāhya), without family (agotra), without caste (avarna), without sight or hearing (acakshuśrotra), without hand or foot (apānipāda), immortal (nitya), multiformed, and all pervasive, extremely subtle, and undiminishing (avyaya); and which is the source of all.67

> One becomes freed from the jaws of death by knowing that which is soundless (aśabdam), touchless (asparśam), colourless (arūpam), undiminishing, and also tasteless (arasam), eternal, odourless, without beginning and end (anādi, anantam), distinct from Mahat and ever constant.68

Very often the negation employed by the śruti is twofold. Contrary attributes are side by side denied in order that the negation of one attribute does not lead to the supposition that brahman is characterized by its opposite.

> Tell (me) of that thing which you see as different from virtue, different from vice, different from this cause and effect, and different from the past and future.69

> It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long, neither red colour nor oiliness, neither shadow nor darkness, neither air nor ether, neither savour nor odour, without eyes or ears, without the vocal organ or mind, non-luminous, without the vital force or mouth, not a measure, and without exterior or interior. It does not eat anything, nor is It eaten by anybody.70

Words are so saturated with the content of finitude, that no single word can directly signify brahman. One is initially surprised to encounter Shankara's statement that even terms like "ātman" and "brahman" are incompetent to directly

denote It. Commenting on BR.U. 1.4.7, Shankara points out that the use of the particle "iti" (thus) along with the word ātman signifies that the truth of the ātman is beyond the scope of the term and concept "ātman". If it were otherwise, the śruti would have said, "One should meditate upon the Ātman". This would have wrongly implied, however, that the term and concept "ātman" were acceptable with reference to the Self.[71] The essential aim of the negative method is to deny all specifications which are the result of superimposition. Neti, neti (not this, not this) can also be seen as a rejection of brahman as a known objectified entity, and a positive hinting of Its nature as the Knower. The negative method, according to Shankara is our only option when we wish to describe brahman free from all known and finite specifications.

> By elimination of all differences due to limiting adjuncts, the words [neti, neti] refer to something that has no distinguishing mark such as name, or form, or action, or heterogeneity, or species, or qualities. Words denote things through one or the other of these. But Brahman has none of these distinguishing marks. Hence It cannot be described as, 'It is such and such', as we describe a cow by saying, 'There moves a white cow with horns'. Brahman is described by mean of name and form and action superimposed on It, in such terms as, 'Knowledge, Bliss, Brahman [vijñānam, ānandam, brahman]' (BR.U. 3.9.28), and 'Pure Intelligence [vijñānaghana]' (BR.U. 2.4.12), 'Brahman', and 'Ātman'. When, however, we wish to describe Its true nature, free from all differences due to limiting adjuncts, then it is an utter impossibility. Then there is only one way left, viz. to describe It as 'Not this, Not this', by eliminating all possible specifications of It that have been known.72

It is obvious therefore, that the method of negation, as understood by Shankara, is more a unique positive way of defining brahman rather than the suggestion of an inability to formulate a concept of brahman. In association with the other methods of teaching, it is remarkably suitable

for indicating the non-objectivity of brahman and Its freedom from all limiting characteristics.

(III). The Method of Lakshanā (Implication)

The two methods of teaching about brahman which we have so far considered are essentially negative in character. They highlight the problems of language in relation to brahman and point to the latter as being beyond the ordinary signification of any words. These methods are successful if they alert us to the difficulties involved in speaking about brahman. They prepare us for, and are made complete by the positive method of definition through lakshanā.[73]

Although references to this method can be found in various places, throughout the writings of Shankara, his most detailed discussion occurs in his bhāshya on Taittirīya Upanishad, 2.1.1. In this verse, we have what is perhaps the most important definition of brahman in Advaita Vedānta.

> Satyam, jñānam, anantam brahma (brahman is Reality, Knowledge and Infinite).[74]

In the light of Shankara's view that the Upanishads impart positive knowledge of brahman and his clear contention that ordinary words cannot directly signify It, it is important to understand how such an apparently positive definition can inform us decidedly about brahman's essential nature.[75]

According to Shankara, the sentence, "satyam, jñānam, anantam, brahma", is meant as a definition of brahman. All three words, which have the same case endings and are in apposition, serve as distinguishing adjectives of brahman. When qualified by these three terms, brahman becomes distinguished from all other substantives. The method is the same as when a lotus is differentiated from all other lotuses by being described as, "big, blue and fragrant".

Shankara formulates a likely objection to this view of "satyam, jñānam, anantam brahma". It is argued that a substantive can be differentiated when there is a possibility of negating alternative attributes. The adjective, "white", for instance, negates "red" or "blue" from the particular lotus. Adjectives are useful when there are many substantives belonging to the same genus, and there is a possibility of qualification by several adjectives. They are not similarly purposeful where there is a single, unique entity and no possibility of any other substantives with alternative attributes. Like the sun, there is one brahman. Unlike the blue lotus, which can be distinguished from the red or white one, there are no other brahmans from which It can be distinguished.

In this case, Shankara responds, the adjectives are meant for defining and not for qualifying brahman. He explains that while an adjective might distinguish a noun from others of the same genus, a definition distinguishes it from all other things. As an example, Shankara gives the

definition of ākāśa as that which gives space. The sentence, "satyam, jñānam, anantam brahma", is meant as a definition of brahman. The three terms are not mutually related since they are meant for subserving the substantive. Each term is independently related to brahman, and the sentence ought to be read in this way: satyam brahman, jñānam brahman, anantam brahman.

The term, "satyam" (Reality), indicates the non-deviation of an object from its established nature. The opposite is anritam (unreality). Changeability is thus equivalent to untruth or unreality. "Satyam" therefore, distinguishes brahman from all changing and therefore, unreal things. On the basis of the word "satyam" alone and its implications, one might conclude that brahman is an insentient material like earth. To avert this conclusion, Shankara says, the term "jñānam" is introduced. "Jñānam" means Knowledge or Consciousness. It conveys the abstract notion of the verb jñā (to know). It does not refer to the agent of knowing (jñānakartā) because of its use in conjunction with "satyam" and "anantam". Reality and Infinity cannot be attributed to the agent of knowledge, since agency implies change. Knowership also implies the division of Knower and known and cannot be described as infinite in accordance with Vedic texts such as, "Wherein one sees nothing else, hears nothing else and understands nothing else, - that is the Infinite; wherein one sees something else, hears something else, and understands something else, - that is Finite. That which is Infinite is immortal; that which is Finite is mortal"

(CH.U. 7.24.1).[76] "Jñānam" therefore, along with "satyam" and "anantam" denies agency and insentiency in brahman. The term "anantam" (infinite), following "jñānam", also serves to negate the idea that because all human knowledge is finite, brahman is similarly limited.

Shankara explains that the word "jñānam" in its ordinary sense cannot define brahman. The word jñāna normally indicates a modification of the intellect and is subject to change. When the word is applied to brahman, however, it is used as identical with brahman and eternal.

> But the Consciousness of Brahman is inherent in Brahman and is inalienable from It, just as the light of the sun is from the sun or the heat of fire is from fire. Consciousness is not dependent on any other cause for its (revelation), for it is by nature eternal (light). And since all that exists is inalienable from Brahman in time or space, Brahman being the cause of time, space, etc., and since Brahman is surpassingly subtle, there is nothing else whether subtle or screened or remote or past, present or future which can be unknowable to it. Therefore Brahman is ommiscient...Just because Brahman's nature of being the knower is inseparable and because there is no dependence on other accessories like the sense-organs, Brahman though intrinsically identical with knowledge, is well known to be eternal. Thus, since this knowledge is not a form of action, it does not also bear the root meaning of the verb. Hence, too, Brahman is not the agent of cognition. And because of this, again, It cannot even be denoted by the word jñāna.77

Shankara explains, however, that brahman can be implied by the word "jñānam" even though the latter cannot directly signify It.[78] Similarly, Shankara point out, the word satya which refers to external reality in general, can only by implication refer to brahman.

> Thus the words truth etc. occurring in mutual proximity, and restricting and being restricted in turns by each other, distinguish Brahman from other object denoted by the words truth etc., and thus become fit for defining It as well.79

The clear contention of Shankara then is that any single term

drawn from general usage can be misleading if applied directly to brahman. When, however, carefully chosen expressions are skilfully juxtaposed, they mutually qualify and eliminate from each other their finite associations. Such terms are then capable of defining brahman by implication. Other striking examples of this kind of exegesis are adduced by Shankara. The word ātman ordinarily refers to the empirical self (jīvātman), identified with the body and subject to the notions of differentiation. When, however, by the process of elimination, the body, etc. are rejected as the Self, the word ātman can then indirectly signify the Self.

> For instance, when an army with the king is seen marching along, with umbrellas, flags, standards, - even though the king is actually hidden by all this paraphernalia and hence, not visible, yet the expression is used 'the king is seen'; and when it is asked which is the king? and people come to look for the particular person who is the king, - everyone of the other persons that are actually visible being rejected (as not being the king), there follows (as a result of elimination) that the person who is not visible is the king, - and thus the idea of the 'king' is secured; - exactly similar is the case in question.80

Similarly, ānanda (Bliss), when used as a definition of brahman cannot be understood as pleasure born out of contact between a sense organ and object. Such a joy is transient; when associated with brahman it is eternal.[81] When used along with brahman, ānanda has to be understood as signifying brahman's very nature. It does not suggest that the Bliss of the Self is cognised.[82]

The kind of implication involved in the exegesis of positive defining words such as "satyam, jñānam, anantam" is of the exclusive - non-exclusive type (jahadajahallakshaṇā).[83] It is not non-exclusive (ajahallakshaṇā) because the word

meaning is not entirely retained. It is not exclusive implication (jahallakshaṇā) because the word meaning is not entirely rejected. By the rejection of the ordinary meaning and the retention of the implied meaning, the word denotation is freed of its finite associations. It is then acceptable for defining brahman. Recourse to implication in the case of sentences such as, "satyam, jñānam, anantam brahman", is necessitated by a frustration of both the logical connection of the words and the purport (tātparya). The direct meanings of the words are incompatible with each other and incapable of defining brahman. The purport in any context is discovered by the application of the sixfold criteria (shadliṅga). By arguing that brahman can only be defined at the implied level of meaning, Shankara is able to accept śruti statements such as, "Failing to reach which (Brahman), words, along with the mind turn back" (TA.U. 2.4.1), and still maintain the adequacy and effectiveness of the śruti as the pramāṇa of brahmajñāna. The essentially negative methods of adhyāropa - apavāda and neti, neti do not culminate in nihilism and are not understood in an absolutely literal sense by Shankara.

> As for the statement that Brahman is beyond speech and mind, that is not meant to imply that Brahman is non-existent. For it is not logical to deny that very Brahman after establishing It with a great show of girding up one's loins, in such sentences of the Upanishads as, "The knower of Brahman attains the highest", "Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, Infinity" (TA.U.2.1.1.); for as the popular saying has it, "Rather than wash away the mud, it is much better to avoid its touch from a distance". As a matter of fact the text "Failing to reach which, words turn back with the mind" (TA.U. 2.9.1) presents only a process of propounding Brahman. The idea expressed is this: Brahman

> is beyond speech and mind; It cannot be classed with objects of knowledge; It is one's inmost Self; and It is by nature eternal, pure, intelligent and free.84

One cannot overestimate the importance of lakshaṇā as a method of defining brahman. It is integral to Shankara's rationale for the Vedas as a pramāṇa of brahman. After his justification of the Vedas as a source of knowledge by showing the limitations of all other pramāṇas with regard to brahman, the problem of the latter's inexpressibility through words, which are unavoidably finite in their reference, still remains. In response to this dilemma, Shankara proposes lakshaṇā as the method of surmounting brahman's inexpressibility. It complements his case for the necessity of śruti by demonstrating its competence and capability to effect brahmajñāna.

4.4 The Lakshaṇā Exegesis of "That Thou Art (Tat Tvam Asi)"

The lakshaṇā method can be demonstrated further by a consideration of the Advaita exegesis of the mahāvākya (great sentence), "That Thou Art (tat tvam asi)".[85] The text first occurs in CH.U. 6.8.7, during a conversation between the teacher Uddālaka and his son Śvetaketu.[86]

The term "tat", according to Shankara, indicates Being, the ground of the entire universe. It is that which is real, eternal and immortal.[87] The word "tvam" indicates Śvetaketu, the son of Uddālaka, the one who was exposed to the teaching, pondered over it and requested to be

taught again.

> This represents the person who, being entitled to be the hearer, the ponderer and the knower, - did not, before he was taught by his father, had not reached the true nature of his own self, as Being, the self of all as distinct from all aggregates of causes and effects, - which - as the Supreme Deity, - had entered into the aggregate of causes and effects made up of Fire, Water and Food, for the differentiating of Names and Forms, - just as a man enters the mirror, as his own reflection, or the sun enters into the water and other reflecting surfaces, as its own reflection; - now, however, having been enlightened by his father by the teaching 'That Thou Art', through a number of illustrations and reasons, - he understood from his father that 'I am Being itself'.88

The result of this instruction, according to Shankara, is the elimination of the notion of doership and enjoyership in respect of the Self. The knowledge imparted by the mahāvākya is incompatible with Śvetaketu's previous notions of himself and displaces the latter.[89] Although Shankara does not specifically mention a lakshaṇā interpretation here, the latter is obvious from the context of his discussion and from his assertion that no word can directly indicate brahman. It is "tvam" stripped of all finite attributes which is identical with brahman.[90]

This best known of Advaita mahāvākyas therefore, is to be understood just like the sentence, "This is that Devadatta".[91] Here the identity is not posited between the primary meanings of "this" and "that". These indicate present and past spatial and temporal conditions, and are clearly incompatible. The accidental qualities of space and time are negated and the identity of Devadatta is asserted by the implied meanings of both terms. The rejection of ordinary for implied meanings is, of course, an instance of jahadajahallakshaṇā.

The primary meaning of "tat" is Consciousness in association with the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, creatorship, etc. In other words īśvara or saguṇa brahman (brahman with qualities). Consciousness unassociated with these upādhis (nirguṇa brahman) is the implied meaning of "tat". Similarly, Consciousness associated with individual ignorance and the qualities of limited knowledge and powers of action is the primary meaning of "tvam". In other words, the individual (jīva). The implied meaning is again pure Consciousness.[92] Like in the sentence, "This is that Devadatta", the primary meanings of "tat" and "tvam" are incompatible. Omniscience and omnipotence are opposed to limited knowledge and powers of creation. This conflict of primary meanings leads to the positing of identity at the level of pure Consciousness, free from the superimpositions of jivahood and Īśvarahood. The exegesis involved here is not jahallakṣaṇā as in the sentence, "The village is on the Ganges", where the express meaning of the sentence is entirely abandoned. In the case of "tat tvam asi", the contradiction is in part of the meaning only. Nor is it a case of ajahallakṣaṇā, because there is an incompatibility involved and part of the meaning has to be dropped. The identity between ātman and brahman is affirmed through jahadajahallakṣaṇā.

Shankara categorically denies any interpretation of "tat tvam asi" other than the absolute identity of ātman and brahman.[93] The sentence is not comparable in meaning to the attribution of the idea of Vishnu on a mūrti and the contemplation of the latter as if it were Vishnu. The

mahāvākya does not ask us to look upon ātman as if it were brahman, but asserts a definite identity. Nor is it to be conceived figuratively (gauṇa) as in the sentence, "You are a lion". If identity was a mere figure of speech, jñāna alone could not lead to the discovery of oneness with brahman and the gain of moksha. "Tat tvam asi" is also not a mere eulogy (stuti). Svetaketu is not an object of worship in the discussion, and it is no praise to brahman to be identified with Svetaketu. A king is not complimented by being identified with his servant. Apart from these interpretations, Shankara concludes, there is no other way of understanding the mahāvākya.

In Chapter 3, our aim was to highlight the deliberate case which Shankara makes out for śruti as the only pramāṇa of brahman. In the light of the current opinions we presented in Chapter 1, it was necessary to clearly demonstrate, by citing crucial arguments from Shankara's commentaries, that his recourse to śruti is not adventitious or dispensable. His rationale is firmly grounded in the argument that because of the very nature of brahman, knowledge through any other pramāṇa is inconceivable.

Our discussion in the present chapter supplements these arguments and affords further insights into the way he regarded the śruti and its capacity to produce brahmajñāna. It was necessary to treat his understanding of the nature of avidyā because the capacity of the śruti to resolve this problem

becomes credible in the light of this approach. Words can liberate where the problem is only a notional one of incorrect understanding. In this sense, the words of the śruti are not unlike those of the passer-by who "produced" the tenth man. We cannot overemphasize the connection between Shankara's arguments for the effectiveness of śruti as a pramaṇa, and his view of the ātman as always available and accomplished. This all-important connection seems to have been entirely missed in current studies of the role of śruti in Shankara. Shankara clearly accepts that the knowledge derived through words is not an end in itself, if the object about which we are informed is as yet unaccomplished or not immediately available. If the object is available but simply misapprehended, correct knowledge through the words of a valid pramāna is all that is needed.

The significance of this distinction is further highlighted by one of the key grounds for his distinction between the karmakāṇḍa and the jñānakāṇḍa. The former does not fulfil itself in the knowledge or information which it provides. It tells us of the means for the achievement of ends not yet actualized. The jñānakāṇḍa, on the other hand, fulfils itself in its informative or revelatory role, for its object (the ātman) is already available. Its fruit (phala) is immediate. It was useful and necessary to focus on Shankara's differences with the Pūrva-Mīmāṇsā over the status of the Vedānta-vākyas, for the points of divergence illuminated his understanding of śruti as a pramāṇa. The dispute clearly showed that he differentiates the Vedānta-vākyas from sentences which prompt engagement in action

for the accomplishment of their end. The Vedānta-vākyas are not redundant because they inform us of an immediately available entity. They have a sufficient and fruitful purport in eliminating our misunderstandings about the ātman. This end is accomplished through the grasping of the purport (tātparya) of the words which constitute the pramāṇa. There is no suggestion here that Shankara conceives the knowledge gained from inquiry (jijñāsā) into the words of the śruti as provisional or hypothetical. There is no indication that it can or needs to be confirmed by any other source of knowledge. Shankara's case for the competence of the śruti as a pramāṇa includes a view about the particular methods employed by śruti for overcoming the limitations of the words it is constrained to use. Śruti is unfolded by specific traditional methods of teaching, and we sought to highlight some of these in the concluding sections of our discussion. Words must be wielded in a manner which frees them from their limited denotations.

The significance of some of these arguments will be further developed in the next chapter, where we examine the nature of brahmajñāna, and the process and context of its acquisition.

CHAPTER 5

THE NATURE OF BRAHMAJÑĀNA - THE PROCESS AND CONTEXT OF ITS ACQUISITION

We have already considered, from different standpoints, Shankara's vindication of the śruti as a pramāṇa of brahman. We have seen his responses to a total denial of its authority. We have also examined his arguments against those who accept the overall authority of the Vedas but forbid any independent purport to the Vedānta-vākyas, assigning them a subsidiary role to the ritualistic texts.

One of our primary concerns in the previous chapter was to explore, in the context of the inherent limitations of language, the problems confronting śabda-pramāṇa in its aim to inform us accurately of brahman. The methods of negation deny brahman to be a limited object of our knowledge, and caution us about the difficulties of defining brahman. The result, however, is not a mere negativism. When we have seen that no word in its direct significance can define brahman, we are shown that definition is possible by the method of implication (lakshaṇā). By a deft handling of rightly chosen and placed words, the latter can to some extent shed their finite apparel and become pointers to the infinite. This is one of the important reasons for Shankara's emphasis on the role of the teacher and the traditional methods of

instruction. The argument in Shankara for the lakshaṇā method of definition is a crucial one, for sabda-pramaṇā is of no avail unless we can properly apprehend the object of our investigation through it.

By considering Shankara's conception of the nature of knowledge along with the mode and conditions of its attainment, we aim, in the present discussion, to clarify further the relationship between śabda-pramāṇa, brahmajñāna and moksha. Our discussion also seeks directly to examine and evaluate the role, if any, of anubhava in the entire scheme of brahmajñāna.

5.1 The Character of Jñāna and its Differentiation from Activity (Karma)

Shankara's distinction between the nature and aim of the karmakāṇḍa and jñānakāṇḍa is central to his entire Vedic exegesis. Another differentiation with wide implications is the one he makes between knowledge and activity.[1] An action (karma), as Shankara understands it, secular or religious, is dependent on the individual (purushatantram) in the sense of involving options. It may or may not be done, or could be done in alternative ways. In moving from one place to another, for example, one may walk, use a vehicle or perhaps not go at all. Options are sometimes even provided by the Vedas in respect of ritualistic activity. In the

atirātra sacrifice, for instance, the sixteenth cup may or may not be used. Oblations can be offered before or after sunrise. It is only with reference to an action that is yet to be accomplished, that injunctions (vidhi) and prohibitions (nishedha) as options, general rules or exceptions are possible. Injunctions and prohibitions, possible in the case of activity, imply the existence of alternatives. They are redundant where an alternative is not possible. The distinctive features of any action then, for Shankara, are the presence of options, the possibility of injunctions and prohibitions, and its dependence on the individual person (purushatantram).

Knowledge, on the other hand, according to Shankara, which involves an already accomplished object, does not involve options dependent on the human intellect. It must entirely conform to the nature of the object and is therefore solely dependent on the thing itself (vastutantram). Knowledge is centred on the object and is as true as the object. It does not involve any choice as far as the nature of its object is concerned. Fire, for instance, cannot be known as either hot or cold. The valid knowledge of a post, for example, cannot be of the form, "This is a post, a man or some unknown object". "This is a post" is valid knowledge because it is dependent on the object and conforms to its nature. Brahman is no exception to this fact. Being an already accomplished object, brahmajñāna is also dependent on brahman.

> An exception can be made with regard to some part of an action, where the general rule would otherwise apply. For example, in the dictum, 'Killing no animals except in sacrifices', (CH.U.8.15.1), the killing of animals prohibited by the general rule is allowed in a special case, viz. a sacrifice such as the Jyotiṣṭoma. But that will not apply to Brahman, the Reality. You cannot establish Brahman, the one without a second, by a general rule, and then make an exception in one part of It; for It cannot have any part, simply because It is one without a second. Similarly, an option also is inadmissible. For example, in the injunctions 'One should not use the vessel Ṣoḍaśī in the Atirātra sacrifice', and 'One should use the vessel Soḍaśī in the Atirātra sacrifice', an option is possible, as using or not using the vessel depends on a person's choice. But with regard to Brahman, the Reality, there cannot be any option about Its being either dual or monistic, for the Self is not a matter depending on a person's choice.2

Following from this general distinction between knowledge and activity is Shankara's very important distinction between knowledge and mental activity. In this context, his definition of an action is significant.

> An action is in evidence where the injunction about it occurs independently of the nature of the thing concerned, and where it is subject to the activities of the human mind.3

As an illustration of a mental action, Shankara gives examples such as, "When the priest is about to utter vausat, he shall meditate mentally on the deity for whom the libation is taken up", or "One should mentally meditate on (the deity identified with) evening".[4] Even though these forms of meditation (dhyāna) are mental, Shankara contends, they are still dependent on the human person (purushatantram) for they involve the options of being done, not done, or done in a different way. Knowledge, on the other hand, is generated entirely by a pramāṇa which has for its object the thing as it exists. It cannot be effected in a way different from the object of its inquiry. Shankara does not

deny that jñāna is mental, but argues for its difference from dhyāna (meditation). Another example which he offers helps to clarify his distinction.[5] The injunction, "O Gautama, a man is surely a fire" (CH.U. 5.7.1), "O Gautama, a woman is surely a fire" (CH.U. 5.8.1), is a mental action where a choice is involved. There is not concern here for the real nature of fire. If, however, fire is to be known as fire, this is a case of jñāna which can only be the result of a valid pramāṇa and does not involve any human option. The real nature of the object cannot be disregarded. Brahmajñāna must conform to the nature of brahman and the pramāṇa involved is sabda-pramāṇa.[6]

It is clear from Shankara's discussion that when he speaks of a mental action, he is identifying it with what is termed as upāsanā or dhyāna (meditation) and he clearly denies brahman as an object of this kind of activity.[7] It is important to pursue this distinction in some detail, for it is germane to our consideration of the role of anubhava. The latter is generally presented as the culmination of an act of meditation or contemplation and seen as the true pramāṇa of brahman.

There are several points in his commentaries where Shankara defines upāsanā.[8] This Brihadāranyaka Upanishad bhāshya definition is typical.

> Meditation is mentally approaching the form of the deity or the like as it is presented by the eulogistic portions of the Vedas relating to objects of meditation, and concentrating on it, excluding conventional notions, till one is completely identified with it as with one's body, conventionally regarded as one's self.9

Shankara mentions four kinds of meditations.[10]

1. Sampad upāsanā: This is an imaginary identification between two dissimilar objects with some similar attributes. For example, the mind has endless modifications and the viśvedevas (gods) are innumerable. On the basis of this resemblance, the mind is contemplated upon as the viśvedevas. The result of this particular meditation is that the upāsaka (meditator) attains infinite worlds.[11] In another example, the bricks (yājushmati) used for building the altar for the agnihotra are three hundred and sixty in number. This is equal to the number of oblations which are daily offered throughout the year. By meditating upon the resemblance between the bricks, the oblations and the days of the year, one attains identity with Fire, the Prajāpati called the year.[12] In sampad upāsanā, the inferior factor (e.g. the mind) is contemplated as the superior one (e.g. viśvedevas) and primacy is accorded to the latter. In the case of the opponent's argument that brahmajñāna involves sampad upāsanā, the parallel is that because of a similarity of Consciousness (caitanya), brahman is merely imagined in the jīva.

2. Adhyāsa upāsanā: In this form of meditation, there is no necessary similarity between the two factors. "One should meditate thus: 'The mind is Brahman'" (CH.U. 3.18.1), and "The instruction is: 'The sun is Brahman'" (CH.U. 3.19.1), are examples of adhyāsa upāsanā. The difference between sampad and adhyāsa upāsanā is that in the latter, primacy is accorded to the locus (ālambana) and not to the superimposed

object.[13] In the case of brahmajñāna, the opponent's contention is that brahman is only superimposed on the jīva and the latter is contemplated as brahman.

3. Kriyāyoga upāsanā: This meditation is based upon some mode of activity. Here the two factors are distinct, but are contemplated as one owing to a similarity of action. Chāndogya Upanishad 4.3.1 - 4, for example, describes Vāyu as the great absorber at the time of cosmic dissolution. Similarly, at the time of sleep, all organs of the individual are said to merge in the vital air (prāṇa). Because of this resemblance in activity, prāṇa is contemplated as Vāyu. Similarly, the jīva is contemplated as brahman because of its association with the act of causing to grow (i.e. because of a common root-meaning of causing to grow).

4. Saṃskara upāsanā: In the upāṅśu sacrifice, there is the injunction that the sacrificer's wife should look at the ghee for its purification. The purification of the ghee is a subsidiary action to the performance of the sacrifice. Similarly, the pūrvapaksha here is that as a subsidiary purificatory rite, the jīva ought to contemplate himself as brahman before the commencement of any ritual. Such a meditation purifies the agent of the specific ritual.

Shankara emphatically argues against the idea that the Vedānta-vākyas are meant for meditation of any of the four above kinds.[14] To suggest this, he adds, would do violence to the purport of the mahāvākyas whose clear intention

is to declare the real identity obtaining between the jīva and brahman. A sentence such as, "One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman" (MU.U. 3.2.9), declaring the simultaneity of jñāna and identity cannot be reconciled with the view that Vedānta-vākyas are meant for meditation. This view also, Shankara adds, contradicts the clearly mentioned result of the knowledge of the already obtaining identity between jīva and brahman.[15]

The significance of Shankara's careful distinction between knowledge and meditation can never be overestimated in the context of the function of the śruti in giving rise to brahmajñāna. It is perhaps a conveniently overlooked distinction, which repudiates the view that the Vedānta-vākyas merely afford an indirect knowledge to be then contemplated upon in order to produce an experience (anubhava) giving direct insight into the nature of brahman. Along with all the other evidence we have considered, it lends support to the direct relationship which Shankara sees in respect of the śruti, brahmajñāna, and moksha. The substance of Shankara's distinction between jñāna and upāsanā is that the action of upāsanā is possible where the real nature of the contemplated object is irrelevant and where the action is directed towards the production of a hither-to non-existent result.[16] Where there is a question of knowing the nature of an object as it is, for which all that is required is the appropriate pramāṇa, then it is a question of jñāna. Meditation is nowhere elevated by Shankara to the status of a pramāṇa. New knowledge is not produced by contemplating, as if they were identical, two known and

distinct entities. Upāsanā does not produce the identity of the contemplated objects and if, as in the case of jīva and brahman, the identity is an already obtaining but unknown one, a pramāṇa is required for its revelation. If the identity is not an already existing fact, it cannot be produced by knowledge alone. It is exceedingly clear that in Shankara's view, the relationship between śruti and brahman is that obtaining between a means of revelation and its revealed object.[17] Upāsanā, however, is not entirely futile in the process of acquiring brahmajñāna. Rightly practised, it purifies the mind and develops its powers of concentration. These are important prerequisites for the acquisition of brahmajñāna.[18]

5.2 The Simultaneity of Knowledge and Freedom

The general understanding that śabda-pramāṇa has only mediate or provisional validity as a means to the accomplishment of moksha is also clearly refuted when assessed alongside very important, but generally ignored, passages from Shankara's commentaries concerning the coincidence of brahmajñāna and moksha.

It is his often repeated contention, supported by numerous scriptural references, that release is simultaneous with the gain of knowledge. He is emphatic in his denial for the necessity of any intervening action between the two. In

fact, from the standpoint of Shankara, it is not even accurate to say that moksha is the fruit or effect of jñāna. Moksha, being identical with brahman, is ever accomplished and eternal. The function of jñāna lies in the removal of obstacles to the appreciation of the ever liberated Self.[19] The relationship is comparable, Shankara says, to that obtaining between standing and singing where no other action intervenes.[20]

> In connection with the subject-matter of injunctions are to be found certain acts which are like the Agnihotra to be performed subsequent to the understanding of the text, through a combination of numerous accessories, to wit, the agent etc. Unlike this, nothing remains to be performed here within the domain of the higher knowledge; but all actions cease simultaneously with the comprehension of the meaning of the sentences, inasmuch as nothing remains to be done apart from continuance in mere knowledge revealed by the words.21

In fact, adds Shankara, the absence of any intervening action constitutes the very beauty and glory of brahmajñāna. The gain of knowledge alone leads to the fulfilment of all human desires.[22] Even the gods cannot frustrate the fruit of brahmajñāna (i.e. the attainment of brahman) since the latter consists merely in the cessation of avidyā. Even as in our everyday world a form is revealed to the eyes as soon as it is properly illumined in light, similarly avidyā and its effects are negated once brahmajñāna is gained.

> They [the gods] succeed in their efforts to put obstacles only in the case of one who seeks a result which is other than the Self and is separated by space, time and causation, but not with regard to this sage, who becomes their self simultaneously with the awakening of knowledge, and is not separated by space, time and causation, for there is no room for opposition here.23

We have already considered the significance of Shankara's distinction between knowledge and meditation. In denying the

necessity for any intervening action between jñāna and moksha, he is very explicit about the redundancy of upāsanā. His bhāshya on Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 1.4.7, includes a fascinating discussion where he considers several related objections from the proponents of meditation.[24] Here the opposing view (pūrvapaksha) is that knowledge and meditation are synonymous. The argument is that in response to its injunctions concerning sacrifices, the Vedas supply the relevant information about the nature of the rituals, the materials and the methods to be used. Similarly, in response to the injunction to meditate, we are told that the ātman is to be the object of meditation through the mind, by means of the practice of renunciation, continence, etc. All the Upanishad texts dealing with the ātman, it is contended, should be seen as part of this meditative injunction. This meditation, it is argued, generates a special kind of knowledge about the ātman which eliminates avidyā. Ignorance is not eliminated merely by the Vedānta-vākyas revealing the nature of the Self. The resemblance, if not identity, between this pūrvapaksha and the more modern interpretations that the mediate knowledge of the Vedānta-vākyas must be converted into anubhava is remarkable.[25] Shankara's unhesitating reply is forceful and unequivocal.

> Except the knowledge that arises from the dictum setting forth the nature of the Self and refuting the non-Self, there is nothing to be done, either mentally or outwardly. An injunction is appropriate only where, over and above the knowledge that arises immediately from hearing a sentence of the nature of an injunction, an activity on the part of a man is easily understood, as in sentences like, 'One who desires heaven must perform the new and full moon sacrifices'. The knowledge arising from a sentence enjoining these sacrifices is certainly not the performance of them. This depends on considerations

> such as whether a person is entitled to perform them. But apart from the knowledge arising from such passages delineating the Self as 'Not this, not this', there is no scope for human activity as in the case of the new and full moon sacrifices etc., because that knowledge puts a stop to all activity.26

Sentences such as, "tat tvam asi", Shankara adds, do not suggest the necessity for any action over and above the knowledge of brahman which they impart. The ritual analogy is inappropriate here. Unlike the ritual, where, after it is enjoined, one wishes its nature, materials and method, once the meaning of the texts defining brahman is understood, there is no further curiosity.[27]

Brahmajñāna, because it is identical with the nature of brahman which is eternal and unchanging, is independent of time, place and circumstances.[28] Its function is neither to create anything anew, nor to alter the nature of an existent entity. Like other valid pramāṇas, its role is entirely informative and revelatory. Because bondage is only a notional problem resulting from a mental confusion of mutually superimposing the Self and non-Self, the Vedānta-vākyas are self-sufficiently adequate to the task of removing ignorance. This is itself the long desired freedom, for bondage and limitation were always only imagined on the ever-free, full and joyful ātman.

5.3 The Fourfold Means (Sādhana-catushtaya)

There is no lack of definitive statements in the writings of

Shankara on the relationship between brahmajñāna and moksha. The Vedānta-vākyas themselves, without any physical or mental accessories liberate; knowledge is itself freedom. Brahmajñāna, however, although mental like other kinds of knowledge, is nonpareil. Generally, our knowledge is involved with the apprehension of objects other than the Knower.[29] It is the knowledge of things which can be objectified. In the case of brahmajñāna, the Knower (drik or sākshin) is the subject of inquiry and investigation. Brahman, the entity to be known, is unique. It is full, complete, without lack or want, eternally peaceful and of the nature of joy. Brahmajñāna is not the vague awareness of a remote brahman to be of this nature. If it were, the inquiry (jijñāsā) would have little relevance to the inquirer's problem. Nārada's angst in the Chāndogya Upanishad is quite typical of the sort of predicament and unaccountable anguish which motivates the inquirer towards brahmajñāna. After listing his accomplishments and mastery of various subjects, he declares his helplessness before the teacher, Sanatkumāra.

> It has been heard by me from persons like your reverence that one who knows the Self passes beyond sorrow; I am in sorrow;- please Sir, make me pass beyond that sorrow.30

Brahmajñāna is the appreciation of oneself to be of the unique nature of brahman, and the receptacle of this knowledge is the mind (antahkarana).[31] If brahmajñāna is to be meaningfully and successfully attained, it is imperative that the mind enjoys a certain disposition. If the ātman to be known is all peace and fullness, such a knowledge cannot occur in a mind which is in perpetual agitation and which entertains countless desires. The beauty and joy of a Self

which shines in everything cannot be discovered in a mind lacking in compassion and love. The significance of brahmajñāna will be lost to one who has not risen above the yearning and pursuit after limited ends. It is vital here therefore, that the receptacle of knowledge relatively conforms to the nature of the object which it seeks to know. Such an identification is not generally required where other kinds of knowledge are concerned. Another reason for emphasizing the indispensability of the right mental disposition is that brahmajñāna, once successfully accomplished, must be continuously retained. Outside of certain contexts and times, there is no need for a constant remembrance of knowledge centred on objects other than the Self. There is no necessity, for example, to be continuously aware and attentive of one's knowledge of geology.

Brahmajñāna, however, is not rewarding unless it is fully integrated and assimilated. Even as one naturally and effortlessly assumes oneself to be limited and identified with the body and its manifold dispositions, so one should spontaneously know oneself to be limitless and complete. For this, the vision of oneself must be held uninterruptedly in one's awareness and this demands certain mental qualities.

It is the lack of these qualities which renders brahmajñāna difficult of attainment.[32] Knowledge itself, once it has emerged, requires no accessories for giving rise to moksha. Its emergence, however, is dependent on various factors.[33] Shankara emphasizes that even inquiry with the aid of the right pramāṇa does not produce knowledge in one who lacks self-control and austerity and who is arrogant.[34]

> Though the intellect in all beings is intrinsically able to make the Self known, still, being polluted by such blemishes as attachment to external objects etc., it becomes agitated and impure, and does not, like a stained mirror or ruffled water, make the reality of the Self known, though It is ever at hand. The favourableness of the intellect comes about when it continues to be transparent and tranquil on having been made clean like a mirror, water etc., by the removal of pollution caused by the dirt of attachment, springing from the contact of the senses and sense object.35

It is important to clarify and emphasize this neglected aspect of brahmajñāna because the role generally assigned to anubhava is partly influenced by the wish to demonstrate that jñāna is not only a process at the cognitive level but involves a transformation of will and emotion. It is perhaps felt that a cognitive change alone is inadequate for the commitment to a new understanding of oneself. It is the search for a level of verification beyond the authority of the Vedānta-vākyas. It is not necessary, however, to misrepresent Shankara's understanding of the śruti in order to make this point. The meaningful emergence of brahmajñāna, as we are seeking to demonstrate, is dependent on a transformation and involvement of intellect, will and emotion.

There are references to these virtues and their roles as prerequisites throughout the writings of Shankara. Commenting on Brahma-sūtra 1.1.1, "Hence (is to be undertaken) thereafter a deliberation on Brahman", Shankara argues that the word "atha" (thereafter) should be understood in the sense of "immediate succession" only.[36] The problem then, he says, is to determine what is that which immediately precedes the inquiry into brahman as a prerequisite of its success. He denies that the inquiry into brahman (brahmajijñāsā)

must be preceded by a knowledge of rituals acquired by an inquiry into the first part of the Vedic texts (karmajijñāsā). Between brahmajijñāsā and karmajijñāsā there are differences of subject matter, result, aspirant and connection between texts and results.[37] The predispositions for brahmajijñāsā have been classified by Shankara under four headings:

1. Viveka
2. Vairāgya
3. Śamādisādhanasampat
4. Mumukshutvam

Before considering each factor separately, it is important to note the close interrelationship which exists among these dispositions. The acquisition of one often presupposes and implies the other. As far as the aspirant is concerned, it is not the perfection of these qualities which is demanded. In fact, such a perfection is not possible without brahmajñāna, when these qualities are spontaneously manifest. What is required is a disposition towards and a relative mastery of the fourfold means. As the inquiry proceeds and understanding grows, the qualities emerge in new depth and profundity.

1. Viveka: This is defined by Shankara as the discrimination between the real (nitya) and unreal (anitya).[38] As a prerequisite of the inquiry into brahman, Shankara's definition cannot be taken as an example of an accomplished understanding of reality. In that case, there is no further need for inquiry. It is perhaps better understood as the capacity to undertake the investigation which leads to the distinguishing of the real from the unreal. Various forms

of reasoning are employed by both teacher and śruti, and the qualified student (adhikārī) should be able to quickly assess and assimilate the impact of these. The quality of viveka underlines the necessity for focusing our capacity for rational thought and analysis upon our quest for brahmajñāna. The deliberation upon brahman is in the form of an inquiry (jijñāsā), during which doubts about the validity of the means of knowledge and about the object investigated are aroused. Such doubts are to be resolved by proper application of the prescribed forms of investigation (e.g. shadliṅga). The adhikārī has also to contend with the views of rival Vedic and non-Vedic systems. The structure of Shankara's commentaries in the form of rival view (pūrvapaksha) and refutation (siddhānta) is an excellent example of the subtlety, detail and fervour of traditional debates.[39] The necessity for an alert and discriminating intellect is emphasized both in the Upanishads and by Shankara.[40] While the inquirer will not have a full grasp of the nature of the real at the initiation of the inquiry, he must have understood, to some extent, the limitations of the non-eternal. This partly explains his motivation to seek out a teacher and is a sufficient incentive for continuation of the inquiry.

2. Vairāgya: This is defined by Shankara as non-attachment to the enjoyment of the results of one's actions here or hereafter. The dispassion, which is a necessary prerequisite of brahmajijnāsā, is aroused by the appreciation of the limitations of non-eternal pursuits. It bears a direct relationship therefore, to viveka. The student will not yet know that the fullness which he seeks through innumerable

desires and activities is not different from himself. He will have discovered, however, that he continues to want, and to feel insufficient inspite of his struggles to fulfil successive desires. He has found that his natural and unconditioned urge to be happy, which gives rise to numerous conditioned and cultivated desires, is forever unsatisfied. He has a deep intimation that there is some lasting and reconciling purpose in existence. Nachiketā, the exemplar of vairāgya in the Upanishads, approaches the teacher Yama for brahmajñāna.[41] As an appraisal of his competence and resolve, Yama tries to dissuade him from yearning for knowledge by luring him with the offer of unmitigated sensual pleasures. Nachiketā, as Shankara says, was as unperturbed as a vast lake.

> O Yama, ephemeral are these, and they waste away the vigour of all the senses that a man has. All life, without exception, is short indeed. Let the vehicles be yours alone; let the dances and songs be yours.
>
> Man is not satisfied with wealth. Now that we have met you, we shall get wealth. We shall live as long as you will rule it. But the boon that is worth praying for by me is that alone (i.e. brahmajñāna].42

Shankara sums up very well the dispassionate state of mind which is a precondition for approaching the teacher.

> In the universe there is nothing that is akrta, a non-product, for all the worlds are effects of karma; and being products of action, they are impermanent. The idea is that there is nothing that is eternal. All actions are productive of transitory things, since all effects of actions are only of four kinds - they can be produced, acquired, purified, or modified; over and above these, action has no other distinctive result. But I am desirous of the eternal, immortal, fearless, unchanging, unmoving, absolute Entity and not of its opposite.43

Jijñāsā therefore, presupposes a certain degree of reflection and analysis upon one's experiences. Brahmajñāna is of the nature of a solution which becomes relevant only when the problem

that informs it is intensely experienced.

It is important to note that the dispassion mentioned by Shankara extends also to results that may be enjoyed in heavenly worlds. The transitoriness of the results of actions is absolute. Even the fruits of meritorious actions, which lead to the attainment of heavenly worlds, are limited. Upon their exhaustion, one is plunged back into the world of mortality.

> They, having enjoyed that spacious world of Svarga, their merit exhausted, enter the world of mortals; thus following the dharma of the Triad, desiring (objects of) desires, they attain the state of going and returning.44

Vairāgya, as a prerequisite of brahmajñāna, is not an attitude of escapism born out of a fear of life. It is associated with a serious reflection upon the nature of one's fundamental pursuit in life and the inherent limitations of finite activites to lead directly to that result. Katha Upanishad describes the human choice as one between the good (śreyah) and the pleasurable (preyah). Good befalls (sādhu bhavati) the discriminating one who opts for śreyah. The short-sighted who aspire for preyah fall short of the supreme human purpose.[45]

3. Śamādisādhanasampat: These six accomplishments are: śama, dama, uparati, titikshā, samādhāna and śraddhā. Śama is generally defined as mental control.[46] It is a disposition closely allied to the acquisition of viveka and vairāgya. A mind which has shed a multiplicity of personal desires, having come to appreciate their limitations, is more disposed to quietness and restraint. Desires for

various objects of enjoyment are, according to Shankara, the principal causes of mental agitation. Vairāgya therefore, is conducive to śama.

> By convincing oneself of the illusoriness of sense-objects through an investigation into their real nature, and by cultivating indifference to worldly objects, the mind can be restrained from sense-objects and brought back to the Self wherein to abide firmly.47

Śama is a discovery which accompanies the unfolding of brahmajñāna rather than a forceful restraint. It is vital for the deep attentiveness necessary in a sustained inquiry. In the person of firm knowledge (jñānī or sthita-prajña), it is a natural quietness and mental restfulness consequent upon the fulfilment of all desires in the knowledge of oneself.[48]

Dama is the control or restraint of the sense organs and the organs of action. It reflects and presupposes the acquisition of śama. It is the natural tendency of the sense organs to be attracted to their respective sense objects, but it is possible by discrimination to turn the attention inward for the knowledge of the Self.[49] The relationship between śama and dama or between intellect, mind and sense organs is beautifully described in the chariot analogy of the Katha Upanishad.[50]

Uparati (withdrawal) seems to differ little from śama and dama, but would seem to indicate the actual state of accomplishment achieved by the practice of both. Sadānanda offers an alternative definition of uparati as indicating the formal renunciation of obligatory duties in accordance with the injunctions of śruti.51

Titikshā (fortitude) is the patient endurance of suffering. It is the cheerful accommodation of the many unpleasant experiences in our relations with our environment and the refusal to unnecessarily linger or lament over them. In the Bhagavadgītā, it is presented as the tolerance of opposites, and the one who achieves success in it is said to be fit for immortality.[52] In terms of human relationships, it expresses itself in an unwillingness to seek redress or revenge. Titiksha is a quality born out of an awareness of the profundity of one's inquiry and a refusal to be diverted. A mind that is easily troubled in the face of the unpleasant, or aroused to heights of excitement in encountering the pleasant, lacks the poise and composure necessary for brahmajijñāsā.

Samādhāna is single-pointedness of mind. It is the ability to focus one's attention upon the object of inquiry until the end is attained. It is an expression of commitment and determination in pursuit of the ideal.

Śraddhā is faith in the authority of the pramāṇa and the teacher who unfolds it. Its importance as a prerequisite is constantly emphasized by Shankara.

> Though when a certain fact has been established by reasoning and scriptural authority, it is always understood to be so (and true), - yet, in the case of extremely subtle things, a man who has his mind taken up by external things, and follows the natural bent of his activities, could find it difficult to understand if he were not imbued with a large degree of faith.53

4. Mumukshutvam is a burning desire for moksha. It is the flame which is fed by all the afore-mentioned qualities.

Unless there is a deep earnestness and sincerity of purpose, efforts will be mediocre.[54]

Equipped with these qualities, the student is ready to undertake brahmajijñāsā and fit to be instructed.[55] It is the qualification of the aspirant by virtue of possessing these prerequisites which ensures that brahmajñāna is immediate in its results and is not a mere theoretical possibility unable to effect a total transformation of vision. In their absence, the declarations of śruti seem indirect and there is perhaps the suspicion that something over and beyond the pramāṇa itself is required for effecting jñāna. As we have noted in Chapter 1, anubhava is presented as that additional pramāṇa which is required for converting the "theory" of the śruti into realized fact. But this denies the direct connection which Shankara affirms between the Vedānta-vākyas, and the results they aim at, and undermines their status as a self-sufficient pramāṇa. Shankara clearly distinguishes Vedānta-vākyas, whose results are immediate, from statements which impel the individual into action for the production of a result. To claim that he advocates a further verification for the Vedānta-vākyas is to deny the clear evidence of his commentaries and to miss the significance and subtlety of his conception of śruti as a pramāṇa. It is also inconsistent with his metaphysics about the nature of brahman and the problem of avidyā. Shankara does not conceive brahmajñāna as unfolded by the śruti and the teacher as a hypothesis needing the aid of another pramāṇa for its certification. It is a means of knowledge, which, in the absence of obstacles,

is immediate in its results. Sādhana-catushtaya is meant for eliminating some of these obstacles and preparing the way for jñāna.

5.4 Karmayoga as Preparation for Brahmajñāna.

The collective aim of sādhana-catushtaya is the attainment of what is termed in Advaita as citta-śuddhi (mental purity). Karmayoga, in Shankara's view, is intended for the accomplishment of the same end.

The successful attainment of jñāna requires that the antahkarana should relatively assume the nature of brahman. To know brahman which is absolute peace, the mind should enjoy an alert poise and equanimity. One obstacle to the discovery of this serenity is the helpless subjection to likes and dislikes. These opposites are termed in the Bhagavadgītā as rāga and dvesha and their mastery is always mentioned as a precondition of brahmajñāna.

> Love and hate lie towards the object of each sense; let none become subject to these two; for, they are his enemies.56
>
> He should be known as a perpetual renouncer who neither hates nor desires; for, free from the pairs of opposites, O mighty-armed, he is easily set free from bondage.57

Conversely, the description of the jñānī in the Bhagavadgītā always includes reference to his triumph over rāga and dvesha.

> He who, without attachment anywhere, on meeting with anything good or bad, neither exults nor hates, his knowledge is steady.58

> He attains peace, who, self-controlled, approaches objects with the senses devoid of love and hatred and brought under his own control.59

The individual subjection to rāga and dvesha is most apparent in his response to the results of various activities. Hoping to find a joy that is ever evasive the human being entertains desires of every description and engages in action for their accomplishment. If the result of the action is favourable, one is elated. If it is not, one is dejected and disappointed. He is therefore, constantly tossed between these pairs of opposites.

> The very desire and aversion which are opposed to each other like heat and cold, which, arising in connection with pleasure and pain and their causes, occur to every being in its turn, are known as pairs (dvandva). Now, when desire, and aversion arise on the occurrence of pleasure and pain or of the causes thereof they cause delusion in all beings and create obstruction to the rise of a knowledge of the Supreme Reality, the Self, by subjugation to themselves the intelligence of those beings. To one whose mind is subject to the passions of desire and aversion, there cannot indeed arise a knowledge of things as they are, even of the external world; and it needs no saying that to a man whose intellect is overpowered by passion there cannot arise a knowledge of the Innermost Self, inasmuch as there are obstacles in its way.60

The solution does not lie in the abandonment of actions, as this is clearly impossible. Withdrawal from pursuits, as Krishna points out (B.G. 3:5-6), without genuine mental detachment is self-deceptive.

> None, verily, even for an instant, ever remains doing no action; for everyone is driven helpless to action by the energies of Nature.
>
> He who, restraining the organs of action, sits thinking in his mind of the objects of the senses, self-deluded, he is said to be one of false conduct.

It is not possible also to perform actions without expecting a result, even though karmayoga is often loosely spoken of as motiveless action. It is obvious that action, even of the

simplest kind, presupposes a motive and the expectation of a result.

Karmayoga, as envisaged by Shankara , is a method of neutralizing rāga and dvesha while remaining in the field of activity. It involves the recognition that while we have to perform actions, the results are beyond our control.[61] These results are determined by īśvara in His role as distributor of the fruits of actions (karmādhyaksha or karma-phala-dātā). Therefore, whether the results are favourable or unfavourable, they are acceptable as coming from Him. Karmayoga is best described as prasāda-buddhi. Even as the sacramental food (prasāda), distributed after the performance of a ritual, is gladly accepted with no regard to its actual nature because it is visualized as coming from Him, so also are the results of ordinary actions seen. This reverential acceptance of results implies the dedication of the action to īśvara. In this sense therefore, karmayoga presupposes, and is, in fact, indistinguishable from bhaktiyoga. Without an attitude of surrender and devotion, it is not possible to gladly accept all results as determined by Him, and Shankara does not particularly attempt to distinguish karmayoga and bhaktiyoga. The worshipful attitude becomes the all-pervasive factor in everything.

> He offers all actions to Isvara, in the faith that, 'I act for His sake', as a servant acts for the sake of the master...The result of actions so done is only purity of mind, and nothing else.62

By this outlook, actions which can normally be an obstacle to the pursuit of freedom become, as a means of mental purification (citta-śuddhi), an indirect aid to its accomplishment.

> When a man who is qualified for (Karma-Yoga) performs obligatory works without attachment and without a longing for results, his inner sense (antahkarana) unsoiled by desire for results and regenerated by (the performance of) obligatory works, becomes pure. When pure and tranquil, the inner sense is fit for contemplation of the Self.63
>
> Though the Religion of Works, - which, as a means of attaining worldly prosperity, is enjoined on the several castes and religious orders, - leads the devotee to the region of the Devas and the like, still, when practised in a spirit of complete devotion to the Lord and without regard to the (immediate) results, it conduces to the purity of mind (sattva-suddhi). The man whose mind is pure is competent to tread the path of knowledge, and to him comes knowledge; and thus (indirectly) the Religion of Works forms also a means to the Supreme Bliss.64

The psychological end-result of karmayoga is the absence of egotistic elation at the successful accomplishment of an action and dejection in failure. Rāga and dvesha are thus effectively neutralized and the mind abides in a quiet joyfulness even as it does in the culmination of every act of worship. It becomes receptive and competent for jñāna. It is obvious therefore, that karmayoga is not envisaged by Shankara as a method for its own sake. It is intended primarily as a preparation relevant to one who has the acquisition of jñāna in view, but is not yet fit to embark directly upon brahmajijñāsā. Karmayoga,according to Shankara, was recommended to Arjuna because of his incompetence for jñāna.[65] As a preparatory attitude, it is redundant after knowledge is gained.[66] This does not imply that the jñānī is debarred from engagement in action. Being free from personal desires, he can act, like Īśvara, for the welfare of others (lokasamgrahārtham) and in order to set an example of right action. In the case of the active jñānī, however, there is no delusion about his essential nature and actions are not accompanied by any sense of doership.[67] The karmayogī

is still acting in the hope of attaining freedom; the jñānī acts out of his already accomplished freedom. Karmayoga does not, in Shankara, describe a specific type of action. It is essentially an attitude with reference to the performance of all actions. It is, in itself, not a direct means to moksha for, like meditation, it is not a pramāṇa. Any aid to jñāna can only serve it indirectly by facilitating its emergence.

5.5 The Triple Process - Śravaṇa (Listening), Manana (Reflection), and Nididhyāsana (Contemplation)

The triple process in relation to the acquisition of brahmajñāna is described in the Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad in the course of Yājñavalkya's instruction to his wife, Maitreyī.[68] In Chapter 1, we have noted the view that the task of śravaṇa is to acquaint us with the declarations of śruti. Knowledge gained during śravaṇa, however, is not self-certifying and therefore incapable of conferring freedom. It is indirect (paroksha) and lacks conviction. In manana, it is argued, we remove all doubts which might have arisen about the validity of what we have apprehended during śravaṇa. The assumption, however, seems to be that even at this stage of the process knowledge is still inadequate. The removal of all doubts is somehow not doubtless, immediate (aparoksha) knowledge. It is only after manana that we can undertake the practice of

nididhyāsana, which eventually provides us with a direct experience of what we have gathered as a possibility in śravaṇa and reasoned over in manana. This experience (anubhava), it is claimed, offers us a direct insight, and it is held up as the true pramāṇa of brahman. The theory of the śruti is realised even as we realise our knowledge of a foreign place when we reach there.

On the accumulative evidence of our analysis so far, however, it is not possible to reconcile Shankara's views with this seemingly well-ordered division. There are many areas of obvious contradiction which cannot be easily dismissed. Besides important questions which arise about the very nature of the experience which nididhyāsana is supposed to produce, its elevation to the status of the ultimate pramāṇa of brahman runs counter to all of the laborious arguments of Shankara to legitimatize and advocate the śruti as the singular and exclusive means of knowledge about brahman. The logic and detail of this justification does not lend support to the view that Shankara's only motive was to secure the prestige of traditional authority in support of his views. Shankara has left no doubts about his view of the pramāṇa for our knowledge of brahman. The argument that śruti needs the confirmation of anubhava which nididhyāsana affords is not reconcilable with the cardinal epistemological theory of svataḥ-prāmāṇya (the self-validity of knowledge). The view that the dependence of one pramāṇa upon another for its validity leads to infinite regress is relevant in this

context. Within the framework of Shankara's views, the śruti is no longer a valid pramāṇa if it cannot independently give rise to valid knowledge. That śabda-pramāṇa is only capable of giving rise to an indirect form of knowledge is also contrary to the main trends of Shankara's arguments. In any assessment of the triple process in brahmajñāna, Shankara's dismissal of the argument that Vedānta-vākyas are meant for meditation is centrally significant. The incompatibility and tensions between both viewpoints are even further evidenced when we look at some of the direct references in Shankara on śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana.

In his Brahma-sūtra bhāshya, Shankara considers a pūrvapaksha that jñāna is a mental action, the fruit of which is moksha.[69] This mental action, it is argued, is enjoined in śruti declarations such as, "The Self, my dear Maitreyī, should be realised - should be heard of, reflected on and meditated upon" (BR.U. 2.4.5.). We have already examined part of Shankara's response in our analysis of the significance of his distinction between knowledge and meditation.[70] Briefly, he has argued there that an action is something with reference to which an injunction is possible, even without regard to the nature of the object, and is dependent on the activity of a person (purushatantram). It may be done, not done, or done in a different manner. Knowledge, on the other hand, is generated by a pramāṇa which has for its object the nature of the thing as it exists. It is not subject to man's choice, for the knowledge of an object, once gained, cannot be dismissed or known in a different way. It is entirely dependent on the

object (vastutantram). An injunction instigating an action is possible where there exists the chance of acceptance or rejection. As the Self, however, brahman can neither be accepted nor rejected and cannot be the object of any injunction.

> Though verbs in the imperative mood etc. are seen (in the Upaniṣad) to be used with regard to this knowledge, they become infructuous like the sharpness of a razor etc. striking against stone etc., for they are aimed at something beyond the range of human effort inasmuch as that knowledge has for its object something (i.e., Brahman) that is neither acceptable nor rejectable.71

If such texts do not enjoin an action in respect of the acquisition of brahmajñāna, what function do they serve? Shankara sees the purpose of such statements in challenging man's attention from its preoccupations with the natural pursuits of sense objects and turning it towards brahmajñāna.

> As for expressions like "(The Self) is to be seen" (BR.U.2.4.5), which are met with in the context of the supreme knowledge, they are meant mainly for attracting one's mind towards Reality, but do not aim mainly at enjoining any injunction about the knowledge of Reality. In ordinary parlance also, when such directive sentences as, 'Look at this', 'Lend ear to that', etc. are uttered, all that is meant is, 'Be attentive to these', but not, 'Acquire this knowledge directly'. And a man, who is in the presence of an object to be known, may sometimes know it, and sometimes not. Hence a man who wants to impart the knowledge of the thing has to draw his attention to the object of knowledge itself. When that is done, the knowledge arises naturally in conformity with the object and the means of knowledge. It is not a fact that any knowledge (of a given thing), contrary to what is well known through other means of valid knowledge, can arise in a man even when acting under some direction. And should the man, under the belief, 'I am directed to know this in such a way', know it otherwise, this cannot be true knowledge.72

The clear implication of Shankara's argument here is that the text does not enjoin a mental action over and above jñāna.

Nididhyāsana, as a mental action, does not produce jñāna.[73]

Shankara terminates his discussion on the fourth sūtra by returning again to a consideration of the roles of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana.[74] Here the objector appears to accept that there is no injunction (vidhi) in śravaṇa. His argument, however, is that since manana and nididhyāsana are mentioned subsequent to śravaṇa, these must be understood as actions enjoined for a result different from the knowledge of brahman gained in śravaṇa. Brahman therefore, still becomes subsidiary to the injunction of reasoning and contemplation. Shankara unequivocally denies that manana and nididhyāsana are meant for accomplishing anything different from the knowledge of brahman gained during śravaṇa. All three processes, he argues, have the same aim of brahmajñāna in view. It is only, he points out, if brahman, known from the śruti, was meant for some other purpose (i.e. beyond the goal of Its knowledge) that it could become the object of an injunction. The argument here again is clear. Brahmajñāna, revealed by the śruti, is the end in itself. Manana and nididhyāsana do not seek to produce a result which is in any way different from the knowledge of brahman gained during śravaṇa.

If these three processes are not different in aim, but are meant for bringing about the knowledge of brahman which is revealed in the Upanishads, we can now turn our attention to the specific function and contribution of each to this end. It is important that these functions be consistent with the general trends of Shankara's arguments so far outlined.

(I). Śravaṇa (Listening)

Śravaṇa indicates the acquisition of knowledge by listening. It suggests, of course, the indispensable role of the teacher in transmitting this knowledge and the oral nature of traditional Vedic learning. It is defined as, "the ascertainment through the six characteristic signs [i.e. shadliṅga] that the entire Vedānta philosophy establishes the one Brahman without a second".[75] Śravaṇa is essentially an exegetical investigation of the purport (tātparya) of the Vedānta texts conducted on the student's behalf by the teacher. As the first of the three processes, it emphasizes the primacy of śruti as the source of brahmajñāna. It is during śravaṇa that the teacher seeks to establish that the Upanishads have brahman as an independent subject matter and are not subservient to the texts enjoining rituals. It is an attempt to show that brahmajñāna is not baseless, but grounded in the authority of the śruti. It is during śravaṇa also that the teacher seeks to unfold the nature of brahman by applying the exclusive-inclusive method of implication to words and sentences defining brahman. Mahāvākyas like "tat tvam asi" are carefully analysed to show that the identity imparted is at the level of Awareness alone. Śravaṇa therefore, incorporates the entire process of Vedantic instruction and encompasses all the traditional methods (e.g. adhyāropa-apavāda, neti, neti) employed by the teacher in gradually unfolding brahman.

Brahman is an already accomplished and ever available entity,

identical with the ātman, and only wrongly apprehended by us. Brahmajñāna is its own end and does not require us to do anything. We are called upon to simply know. It is entirely reasonable and consistent with Shankara's arguments to suggest that the act during which we eliminate our misapprehensions and correctly comprehend the nature of brahman must be the principal one in the process of brahmajñāna. As the direct inquiry into the only pramāṇa of brahman, śravaṇa must be granted primary significance. This accords with both Shankara's epistemology, and his metaphysics as it relates to the fully notional problem of avidyā. The view that śravaṇa is capable only of affording a speculatory or hypothetical knowledge of the ātman raises two kinds of questions. Firstly, it implies, contrary to the main thrust of Shankara's reasoning, that something over and above the knowledge of ātman gained from the Vedānta-vākyas is required. It also, of course, undermines Shankara's concept of the śruti as a pramāṇa. Secondly, and very interestingly, it raises doubts about the method of teaching which such an understanding suggests. How does the teacher unfold brahman, the self-manifest Awareness of the student, in an entirely conjectural manner? The subject matter is not a remote entity to be reached or created and the aim of the Advaita teacher is to produce immediate liberating knowledge. The problem that confronts him is akin to the tenth man analogy. The limitless ātman mistakenly attributes on itself the qualities of finitude, even as the alive tenth man erroneously denies himself. If the teacher's exegesis follows the texts of the Upanishads, there is a little scope for indirect instruction, for the

hearer must be made to appreciate brahman as his very Self. It is impossible to putatively exegesize texts like the following from the Kena Upanishad.

> That which is not uttered by speech, that by which speech is revealed, know that to be Brahman, and not what people worship as an object.
>
> That which man does not comprehend with the mind, that by which they say, the mind is encompassed, know that to be Brahman and not what people worship as an object.
>
> That which man does not see with the eye, that by which man perceives the activities of the eye, know that alone to be Brahman and not what people worship as an object.[76]

The exegesis of passages like these can only proceed by helping the student to appreciate the non-objectivity of himself as the Knower. In other words, passages like these are direct in their instruction of the Self as brahman and they aim at complete knowledge. There is no evidence that Shankara understands their function in any other way. To the skilful teacher and the qualified student, śravaṇa can never mean the hypothetical instruction which it is made out to suggest in current opinions.

If śravaṇa therefore, does no produce brahmajñāna, the explanation does not lie in its conjectural nature or in the fact that brahmajñāna is not its aim. There might be several possible obstacles. For example, in spite of being exposed to the instruction of the teacher, the listener might be unconvinced. He could be troubled by doubts about various aspects of the teaching. His doubts could concern the validity of the pramāṇa or the nature of brahman. According to Shankara, the knowledge that leads to moksha must be free from all doubts.[77] It is to deal with this impediment to jñāna that the second of the

threefold process is suggested.

(II). Manana (Reflection)

Manana is defined as, "the constant thinking of Brahman, the one without a second, already heard about from the teacher, by arguments agreeable to the purport of the Vedānta".[78] There are numerous references in Shankara to the possibilities and limitations of reason in relation to brahmajñāna, and it is important that they be properly correlated so that we can accurately evaluate the contribution of manana to the acquisition of knowledge.

Shankara is certain that independent reasoning cannot lead to brahmajñāna. This conclusion emerges very clearly from several discussions in his commentaries. In his bhāshya on Brahma-sūtra 2.1.11, he says that reasoning which is not rooted in the Vedas and springs from mere conjecture lacks conclusiveness.[79] Human conjecture has no limits. The thoughts of one group of clever men, he points out, are falsified by others, and these are also in turn eventually contradicted. Intellectual opinions differ and arguments are indecisive. We cannot hold fast to the views of eminent thinkers like Kapila and Kaṇada, for even they are seen to contradict each other.[80]

To this view, the rationalist responds by arguing that not all reasoning is inconclusive, for this conclusion is

arrived at by reasoning alone. Besides, if we were to adopt the view that all reasoning is inconclusive, ordinary life becomes impossible. Future plans for securing happiness and avoiding pain, the rationalist remonstrates, are made on the supposition that nature is uniform in the past, present and future. Even with regard to divergent interpretations of Vedic passages, reasoning is applied in order to arrive at the correct meaning. The tentative nature of reasoning, he contends, is its advantage. Faulty reasonings can be discarded in favour of sound ones. Even as a man should not be considered a fool because his ancestors were foolish, so also, all reasoning should not be discarded because some forms are defective. Shankara's reply, which sums up very well his views on the limits of reason in relation to brahmajñāna, is worth quoting in full.

> Although reasoning may be noticed to have finality in some contexts, still in the present context it cannot possibly get immunity from the charge of being inconclusive; for this extremely sublime subject-matter, concerned with the reality of the cause of the Universe and leading to the goal of liberation, cannot even be guessed without the help of the Vedas. And we said that It cannot be known either through perception, being devoid of form etc., or through inference etc., being devoid of grounds of inference etc.
>
> Besides, it is the accepted view of all who stand by liberation that freedom from bondage comes from true illumination. And that true enlightenment has no diversity, since its content is the thing-in-itself. That content of knowledge is said to be the most real since it ever remains the same; and in the world, the knowledge of that kind is said to be right knowledge, as for instance, the knowledge about fire that it is hot. This being the case, people should have no divergence when they have true knowledge, whereas the difference among people whose knowledge is based on reasoning is well known from their mutual opposition. For it is a patent fact of experience, that when a logician asserts, 'This indeed is true knowledge', it is upset by

somebody else. And what is established by the latter is disproved by still another. How can any knowledge, arising from reasoning, be correct, when its content has no fixity of form?...It is not also possible to assemble all the logicians of past, present, and future at the same place and time, whereby to arrive at a single idea, having the same form and content, so as to be the right source of knowledge. But since the Vedas are eternal and a source of knowledge, they can reasonably reveal as their subject-matter something which is (well established and) unchanging; and the knowledge arising from them can be true, so that no logician, past, present, or future can deny it.81

Shankara's conclusions in passages like these do not imply the complete rejection of every form of reasoning. Indian philosophy generally employs two kinds of reasoning.[82] The first type is the syllogistic inference or anumāna as illustrated by the establishment of fire from the perceived smoke. We have seen, however, that because brahman possesses no perceptible characteristics, this kind of reasoning is inapplicable. The second type is termed sāmānyato-dṛishṭānumāna and is equivalent in modern logic to analogical reasoning. It is also designated as yukti or tarka. This type of reasoning is not itself a pramāṇa, but operates as an ancillary to a pramāṇa. Its funçtion is to produce a belief in the possibility of a thing. In relation to brahmajñāna, the aim of all such tarkas is to strengthen the teaching of the Upanishads. The Nyāya argument that the world as an effect must have as its source a sentient being is viewed by Advaita as an example of this kind of reasoning. This argument cannot conclusively establish Īśvara's existence, but it demonstrates the reasonability of His revelation in the śruti.

Reasoning in harmony or conformity with the śruti is what Shankara repeatedly emphasizes.

> It was also argued that by enjoining 'reflection' over and above 'hearing', the (Bṛhadarāṇyaka) Upaniṣad shows that logic is also to be honoured. But through such a subterfuge, empty logic cannot find any scope here; for logic, conforming to the Upaniṣads, is alone resorted to here as a subsidiary means helping realization.83

Śruti has to be supplemented by such kinds of tarka because of the variety of contradictory views which are held about the distinctive nature of brahman.[84] These arguments fortify the Vedānta-vākyas.

> The realization of Brahman results from the firm conviction arising from the deliberation on the (Vedic) texts and their meanings, but not from other means of knowledge like inference etc. When, however, there are Upaniṣadic texts speaking of the origin etc. of the world, then even inference, not running counter to the Upaniṣadic texts, is not ruled out in so far as it is adopted as a valid means of knowledge reinforcing these texts; for the Upaniṣads themselves accept reasoning as a help.85

The meaning of śruti should be tested in the light of arguments, for it is only when they are both combined that they can show the unity of the ātman, "as clearly as a bael fruit on the palms of one's hand".[86]

Even when Shankara seems to suggest that Advaita can be established by tarka alone, close examination reveals that the reasoning employed is only of the analogical type in conformity with śruti (śrutyanugṛihīta tarka). In his introduction to Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad 4.5.1, he says that the Yājñavalkya section of the text illustrates the establishment of brahmajñāna by tarka. Yet, the arguments which Shankara uses in this section are not of an independent kind. At one point, he argues that the sun and the moon, which are like two lamps giving light to all beings, are held in place even as a kingdom under the unbroken and orderly rule of a king. He says that even as we infer the

existence of the lamp-maker from a lamp, the sun and moon "must have been created for the purpose of giving light by a Universal Ruler who knows of what use they will be to all, for they serve the common good of all beings by giving light".[87] We cannot construe this as an independent argument for the establishment of the Self, for it is the very kind of argument which Shankara criticizes Nyāya for independently using to verify īśvara's existence.[88] Similarly, in his Māṇḍūkya Upanishad Kārikā bhāshya, Shankara says that non-duality can be demonstrated on logical grounds.[89] That these are not independent logical grounds becomes obvious when he concludes his commentary on the Kārika by pointing out that non-duality is to be known only from the Upanishads and that this doctrine was not the same as that unfolded by the Buddha, in spite of certain similarities.

> That the nature of the supreme Reality is free from the differences of knowledge, the known, and the knower and is without a second, this thing was not expressed by Buddha; though a near approach to non-dualism was implied in his negation of outer objects and his imagination of everything as consciousness. But this non-duality, the essence of the ultimate Reality, is to be known from the Upanisads only. This is the purport.90

It will be useful to further clarify the nature of reasoning employed in Advaita by looking at some examples. The Upanishad, for example, declares the Self to be ānanda (Joy).[91] This conclusion may seem doubtful to the aspirant because of the general tendency to pursue joy by striving after acquisitions other than the ātman and the common experience of sorrow (duḥkha). In order to demonstrate the reasonableness of the śruti revelation, arguments of the following kind are employed. If the joy which is assumed to be the content of the pursued object was an objective

quality of it, the object should universally make any person happy. It is impossible, however, to find a single object which can satisfy this criterion. An object which appears to be a source of delight to one is very often a cause of pain to another. This is not only valid in relation to different individuals. A single object at different periods of time could be a source of joy and sorrow to the same individual. Reasoning therefore suggests that our belief in the presence of joy in objects other than the Self is not unquestionable. Ānanda appears to be related to desirability. In deep sleep, there is an experience of joy without any object or sense of possession. Advaita suggests that this joy is identical with the Self. It explains that in the fulfilment of a desire, we only temporarily eliminate the sense of want and inadequacy, entertain a thought of fullness, and identify with a joy that is not different from the Self. We mistakenly, however, attribute the source of this joy to the object outside. Yuktis of this kind therefore, strengthen and make reasonable the śruti declaration that ātman is ānanda.

Another example of acceptable reasoning, suggested by Shankara himself, concerns the analysis of our three states of experiences.[92] Śruti informs us that the ātman is changeless, and this is found to be consistent with our own experiences. In the waking state (jāgarita avasthā), all our experiences are illumined by Awareness (cit). As the Knower (drik), ātman is the Witness of the entire waking world. In the dream state (svapna avasthā), the waking world is temporarily negated and a world of subtle experiences

projected. The Self as Awareness, however, also illumines and makes these experiences known. The entire dream experience is enveloped in the light that is Awareness. The state of deep sleep (sushupti avasthā) negates both the waking and dream worlds, but even here, Advaita contends, the experience is known. Statements like, "I had an undisturbed, pleasant sleep", indicate the presence of Awareness. Thus, the three states and their experiential content vary and mutually negate each other, but the common unchanging factor is the Self.[93] The Bhagavadgītā uses the argument of unchanging Awareness in the states of childhood, youth and old age to illustrate the immortality of the Self.[94] States and experiences differ, but "I know" is common to all states and life experiences. Arguments such as the difference of the Knower from the known are used to reinforce the śruti's revelation of the distinction of the Self from the body, sense organs and mind. Each one is progressively distinguished by showing that it is subject to objectification and therefore, different from the Knower.

The same function of creating certainty in the śruti is served by a profuse use of analogies in the texts themselves and by Shankara. The rope-snake analogy, so frequently resorted to by Shankara, illustrates a creation of ignorance as a result of incomplete knowledge and its immediate negation by right knowledge. The story of the tenthman aptly illustrates the notional loss and gain of something that is already available. It also reveals very well the sense of sorrow which can accompany a fictitious loss, and the joy and freedom which knowledge brings. The crystal ball

example shows how the ātman, while remaining pure and unaffected, seems to assume the characteristics and qualities of adjuncts (upādhis) with which It becomes associated.

> Just as before the perception of distinction, the transparent whiteness, constituting the real nature of a crystal, remains indistinguishable, as it were, from red, blue and other conditioning factors; but after the perception of distinction through the valid means of knowledge, the crystal in its latter state is said to attain its true nature of whiteness and transparence, though it was exactly so even earlier; similarly in the case of the individual soul, remaining indistinguishably mixed up with such limiting adjuncts as the body etc. there springs up a discriminating knowledge from the Upaniṣads constituting his rising from the body (consciousness); and the result of the discriminating knowledge is the attainment of the real nature, its realization of its nature as the absolute Self.95

Brahman as both instrumental (nimitta kārana) and material cause (upādāna kāraṇa) of the creation is made comprehensible when compared with the spider's projection of its web.[96] The non-difference of cause and effect is illustrated by the analogy of clay or gold and their many products. Differences are the creation of name alone.[97] The example of space is often cited. It illustrates the purity of the Self in spite of Its association with the body, as well as the accommodation of all change by the changeless Self.[98] Brahman appears divided even as the space within pots is only seemingly broken up.[99] Analogies, however, are useful only as a method of teaching.

> Since the Self is by nature Consciousness Itself, distinctless, beyond speech and mind, and can be taught by way of negating other things, hence in scriptures dealing with liberation an illustration is cited by saying that it is "like the sun reflected in water".100

An interesting objection is raised against the above analogy. Both the sun and water are limited entities remotely placed from each other. It is possible therefore, for the sun to

be reflected on the latter. The Self, however, is unlimited and all-pervasive. There is nothing remote or separate from It. The comparison therefore, is inappropriate.[101] In responding to this, Shankara explains that between the illustration and the thing illustrated, there is similarity only in some respects. It is this that is the focus of attention. If both objects were identical in all respects, the analogy would not be possible. He points out the particular aim of this analogy.

> 'A participation in increase and decrease', inasmuch as the reflection of the sun in water increases with the increase of water, and decreases with its reduction, it moves when the water moves, and it differs as the water differs. Thus the sun conforms to the characteristics of the water; but in reality the sun never has these. Thus also from the highest point of view, Brahman, while remaining unchanged and retaining Its sameness, seems to conform to such characteristics as increase and decrease of the limiting adjunct (body) owing to Its entry into such an adjunct as the body. Thus since the illustration and the thing illustrated are both compatible, there is no contradiction.102

The primary function of manana therefore, is to demonstrate the tenability of śruti's declaration. It is neither an independent means to brahmajñāna, nor an alternative to the śruti. Contrary to the sharp distinctions we have examined in Chapter 1, manana is not necessarily exercised only after śravaṇa. It is an integral part of śravaṇa itself. The application of the sixfold canons of interpretation in determining the purport of the Vedānta-vākyas is an exercise of reasoning and critical evaluation. It is important to remind ourselves that upapatti or intelligibility in the light of reasoning is one of those canons. Reasoning is also necessary for determining whether a word or passage should be understood in its primary (mukhya) or secondary

(lakshya) sense and in distinguishing between the different forms of the latter. Manana is a process provoked by the teacher himself, as he uses various kinds of yuktis, to create certainty in his student. Doubts are often resolved in dialogue with the teacher during śravaṇa. Manana is also useful for refuting the views of systems opposed to Advaita. Shankara explains that although the entire Brahma-sūtra is meant only for showing that the Upanishads have brahman as their purport, and not for proving or disproving any conclusion by pure logic, it is necessary to repudiate the views which run counter to right knowledge. This need arises because of the reputation which some of these alternative views enjoy and the difficulty of properly evaluating their worth.[103] This function is approached by Shankara in a twofold way. If the views of these schools are based on their interpretations of śruti, the validity of these interpretations are questioned by exegesis. If they are based on mainly rational grounds, their inconsistencies and contradictions are exposed.[104] In this way an attempt is made to show that they are untenable.

Because brahmajñāna is born out of the śruti as śabda-pramāṇa, the role of manana must therefore, be a largely negative one. It releases and relieves knowledge from doubt. If brahmajñāna is not produced by the investigation of the pramāṇa, it is difficult, in the context of Shankara, to conceive how it can be produced only by manana. The problem is like the relationship between any means of knowledge and its respective object. If a form is not perceived by

the eye, for instance, because of the intervention of some obstacles, these must be eliminated, and the eye again employed. It is the only appropriate organ. Similarly, if the śruti does not give rise to knowledge because of doubts, it is the function of manana to remove such doubts in order that knowledge is unobstructed. Because of its radical challenge to our habitual conception of ourselves, it is difficult to imagine śravaṇa not provoking doubts of different kinds. It is consistent with Shankara's views to suggest, however, that if doubtless knowledge is gained during śravaṇa, there is no need for manana. The suggestion here is that if śravaṇa fails to engender direct knowledge, it is not because of the absence of intention to do so or the presence of any natural limitations. The reasons are to be found in the various obstacles to the emergence of knowledge, related to the preparedness of the student.

(III). Nididhyāsana (Contemplation)

The view, presented in Chapter 1, that nididhyāsana is necessary for an experience in which alone brahmajñāna is conclusively gained, raises several problems in relation to Shankara's central views. Besides the misunderstanding and underestimation of the role of śravaṇa, the argument seems self-contradictory. It accepts that the aim and achievement of manana is the creation of doubtless knowledge. It then immediately suggests that this well ascertained and doubtless knowledge is inadequate. This contradiction is never resolved

and we are not made aware of what then is the exact status of brahmajñāna after manana. That brahmajñāna is the product of an act of meditation is at variance with Shankara's recurrent distinction between knowledge and meditation and his view that the sentences of the Upanishads are not meant for the latter. His view, as we have seen, is that the Vedānta-vākyas directly give rise to knowledge, the results of which are immediate. Knowledge does not need to be followed by any physical or mental act.[105] In fact, meditation cannot follow knowledge, for it presupposes a duality which is already negated in brahmajñāna.[106] The entire weight of Shankara's arguments is opposed to the view that an act of meditation is necessary over and above the knowledge gained from the śruti for brahmajñāna. The view that only through anubhava afforded by nididhyāsana is brahman really ascertained displaces śruti as the definitive pramāṇa.

Avidyā is not an absolute ignorance of the ātman, but an erroneous knowledge of It, which leads to the the superimpositior (adhyāsa) of attributes properly belonging to the body, senses and mind. It is a confusion arising from the inability to discriminate and distinguish between the Self and non-Self. It is obvious therefore, that avidyā at the individual level is a mental modification (antaḥkaraṇa vṛitti) but of an erroneous nature. A vṛitti is a mode or modification of the internal organ (antaḥkaraṇa) and it is clear that Shankara conceives all mental processes, cognitive, conative and emotive, as modifications of the internal organ.[107] This incorrect mental modification can only be negated and

corrected by another antaḥkaraṇa vṛitti which coincides with the object to be known and which is produced by an adequate and appropriate pramāṇa. It is exceedingly important to note that Shankara all along sees brahmajñāna as a mental process occurring in the mind and not transcending it. Brahmajñāna is of the nature of an antaḥkaraṇa vṛitti coinciding with the nature of brahman and produced by Its authoritative pramāṇa, the śruti. There is no basis in Shankara for conceiving of its nature in any other way. The references in his commentaries are explicit.

> (Objection): In this connection some conceited pedants say: To no man can arise the conviction 'I am the immutable Self, the One, the non-agent, devoid of the six changes, such as birth, to which all things in the world are subject; which conviction arising, renunciation of all works is enjoined.
>
> (Answer): This objection does not apply here. For, in vain then would be the Scriptural teaching, such as, 'the Self is not born', etc (B.G.2:20). They (the objectors) may be asked why knowledge of the immutability, non-agency, unity, etc., of the Self cannot be produced by the Scripture in the same way as knowledge of the existence of dharma and adharma and of the doer passing through other births is produced by the teaching of the Scripture?
>
> (Opponent): Because the Self is inaccessible to any of the senses.
>
> (Answer): Not so. For the scripture says, "It can be seen by the mind alone" (BR.U. 4.4.19). The mind, refined by Sama and Dama - i.e., by the subjugation of the body, the mind and the senses - and equipped with the teaching of the Scripture and the teacher, constitutes the sense by which the Self may be seen. Thus, while the Scripture and inference teach the immutability of the Self, it is mere temerity to hold that no such knowledge can arise.108

Meditation or any experience that might arise from it is nowhere envisaged by Shankara as independently capable of producing the appropriate antaḥkaraṇa vṛitti which can eliminate Self-ignorance (atmā-avidyā).109 Shankara accepts

that this vṛitti, produced in the mind by the Vedānta-vākyas, does not enjoy the status of absolute reality (pāramārthika sattā). Its reality would be the same as that of the world, the Vedas and the antahkaraṇa. He sees no difficulty, however, in its capacity to negate ignorance (avidyānivṛitti) and effect the knowledge of the absolutely real.[110] He willingly concedes that once brahmajñāna is effected, the absolute reality of the Vedas is also negated.[111] The Vedānta-vākyas, having negated from brahman all upādhis, eventually negate themselves.

Sureśvara develops a line of argument which is fully consistent with what we have so far seen in Shankara about the nature of brahmajñāna and the function of meditation. In the Naishkarmya Siddhi, he deals with the argument that the knowledge derived from śabda-pramāṇa is mediate and indirect (paroksha) and becomes a direct conviction only through meditation (prasaṃkhyāna).[112] According to Sureśvara, if the properly understood and interpreted Vedānta-vākyas do not produce immediate knowledge, continuous contemplation on their purport in the form of hearing and reasoning will not do so.[113] Meditation can only produce the ability to habitually concentrate the mind, but it is not through meditation that the pramāṇas yield knowledge.[114] They do so directly. Besides, according to Sureśvara, if someone gains knowledge through the śruti and then denies the same, knowledge through any other source is likely to be rejected.[115] If one does not accept that the śruti is capable of producing direct knowledge, then the texts cease to be authoritative. Moksha becomes non-eternal if it is conceived of as the

product of an act of meditation.[116] By emphasizing the need for prasaṃkhyāna over and above the Vedānta-vākyas, one elevates prasaṃkhyāna to the status of a pramāṇa. This is as absurd as trying to take food with one's eyes.[117] Suresvara all along emphasizes that direct knowledge is the result of inquiry into the Vedic texts.[118] Sureśvara, however, accepts that prasaṃkhyāna, as repeated hearing and pondering of the Vedānta-vākyas, is acceptable. He grants that a clear comprehension of the texts may not result from a single hearing, but may do so after repeated listening.[119] In this sense prasaṃkhyāna becomes an integral part of śravaṇa or the process of ascertaining the meaning of the texts. Like Shankara, he emphasizes the importance of mental purity (citta-śuddhi) as a precondition of brahmajñāna.[120]

Sadānanda defines nididhyāsana as, "a stream of ideas of the same kind as those of Brahman, the One without a second, to the exclusion of such foreign ideas as those of the body etc".[121] This definition is reconcilable with a function that Shankara assigns to contemplation, after brahman has been apprehended from the śruti. In addition to doubts, which it is the function of manana to eliminate, brahmajñāna may be subject to a further impediment. Even after the gain of brahmajñāna the deep impressions (vāsanās) formed as a result of habitual identification with the body, sense-organs, and mind, may reassert themselves, and there is a possibility of lapse from Self-knowledge. This possibility is increased by the fact that the effects of actions which have given rise to this particular embodiment and life-experience continue to

bear fruit.

> Since the resultant of past actions that led to the formation of the present body must produce definite results, speech, mind and body are bound to work even after the highest realization, for actions that have begun to bear fruit are stronger than knowledge; as for instance an arrow that has been let fly continues its course for some time. Hence the operation of knowledge, being weaker than they, (is liable to be interrupted by them and) becomes only a possible alternative. Therefore there is need to regulate the train of remembrance of the knowledge by having recourse to means such as renunciation and dispassion.122

For brahmajñāna to be meaningful and fruitful to the aspirant, it should continuously and steadily abide in his mind, and not be displaced by age-old tendencies and inclinations.[123] Shankara argues therefore, that Upanishad sentences such as, "The Self alone is to be meditated upon" (BR.U.1.4.7), and, "The intelligent aspirant after Brahman, knowing about this alone, should attain intuitive knowledge" (BR.U.4.4.21), are meant for impressing upon us the need for sustaining a continuous trend of thought centred on the nature of the Self, so that knowledge is not overwhelmed by erroneous past tendencies.[124] Sentences such as these, he explains, are not intended for indicating any act for the production of a new result over and above the knowledge of brahman gained from the śruti. This contemplation of the ātman is not different from the knowledge that is gained during śravaṇa.[125] They do not constitute original injunctions, enjoining something entirely unknown.

> The very knowledge of the nature of the Self removes the ignorance about It, consisting in identification with the non-Self, and the superimposing of action, its factors, principal and subsidiary, and its results (on the Self). When that is removed, evils such as desires cannot exist, and consequently thinking of the non-Self is also gone.

> Hence on the principle of residium, thinking follows as a matter of course. Therefore meditation on it, from this point of view, has not to be enjoined, for it is already known from other sources.126

On the evidence of Shankara's commentaries, it is quite clear that the idea of contemplation after sravana and manana is understood to mean continuous fixing of attention on knowledge already gained. It is not seen as an avenue to any new knowledge.[127] In the context of this view, even as manana is an integral part of śravaṇa, nididhyāsana is not distinct in intention and purpose from both, except that it presupposes the gain of brahmajñāna. Nididhyāsana ensures that brahmajñāna becomes a natural and spontaneous part of one's thinking, even as the former limited notions of oneself. Nididhyāsana therefore, must be carefully distinguished from what is understood as meditation (upāsanā) proper by Shankara. The latter, according to Shankara, is a mental action which does not necessarily depend upon or conform to the exact nature of the meditated object. The object may be thought of as something else.[128] Nididhyāsana, on the other hand, is the contemplation of an object, already conclusively known from a valid pramāṇa, as it really is. This contemplation is not meant for gaining anything beyond the knowledge already gained from the authoritative pramāṇa. Nididhyāsana is therefore, strictly speaking, a process of and identical with jñāna or pramā rather than upāsanā (meditation). To contemplate a thing as it is can only be knowledge, for such a contemplation would be dependent on the nature of the object (vastutantram) and not on the will of the contemplator (purushatantram).[129]

There is no absolute rule about the effort required in śravaṇa, manana or nididhyāsana for the gain of knowledge. It is dependent, in Shankara's view, on the aptitude and qualification of the student. This is clear in Shankara's reply to a pūrvapaksha that if brahmajñāna is not gained during the first hearing of the teaching, it cannot be gained by a repetition of the same. In addition to the light which it sheds on his understanding of the threefold process, this particular reply is very significant for its revelation of Shankara's understanding of the Advaita method of instruction as it relates particularly to the exegesis and unfolding of the mahāvākya, "tat tvam asi". It is a very clear statement on the direct relation between the śruti and brahmajñāna.

> Repetition will be unnecessary for one who can realize the Self as Brahman after hearing 'That thou art' once only. But for one who cannot do so, repetition is a necessity. Thus it is noticed in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad that Uddālaka teaches his son, 'That thou art, O Śvetaketu' (CH.6.8.7), and then being requested by his son again and again, 'O revered sir, explain to me again' (ibid.), he removes the respective causes of his (Śvetaketu's) misconceptions, and teaches that very fact, 'That thou art' repeatedly. That very process is referred to by citing the text, 'It is to be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon' (BR.U.4.6.6)....It is a matter of experience that though the meaning may be vaguely apprehended from a sentence uttered only once, people understand it fully after removing progressively the false ideas standing in the way, through a process of sustained consideration. Again, the text 'That thou art' speaks of the identity of the entity denoted by 'thou' with the entity denoted by 'That. By the word 'That' is denoted the Brahman under discussion that is Existence, the Witness, and the cause of the birth etc. of the universe as is well in evidence in such texts as, 'Brahman is Truth, Knowledge, and Infinite' (TA.U. 2.1.1.), 'Knowledge, Bliss, Brahman' (BR.U.3.9.28), 'This Immutable is never seen, but is the Witness, It is never known, but is the Knower' (BR.U.3.8.11), 'Without birth, decrepitude, death', 'Neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long' (BR.U.3.8.8), and so on. In these texts, changes like birth etc. that befall all

> things are denied by the words 'without birth' etc. and the properties of matter like grossness etc. are denied by the words 'neither gross' etc. By the words 'knowledge' etc. it is stated that Brahman is by nature Consciousness and Effulgence. This object called Brahman, which is denoted by the word 'That', which is free from all mundane attributes, and which is by nature Consciousness, is well known to the people who are adepts in the Upaniṣads. Equally well it has been known by them that the inmost Self of the taught (i.e. disciple) is the meaning of the word 'thou', which is the seer and the hearer, and which is thought of as the inmost entity inhabiting the sheaths starting from the gross body, and which is then ascertained as Consciousness Itself. That being the case, the sentence 'That thou art' cannot produce a direct realisation of its meaning in those people to whom these two entities remain obstructed by ignorance, doubt, and confusion; for the meaning of a sentence is dependent on the meaning of the words (constituting it). Thus it is that for such people it becomes desirable to resort repeatedly to the scriptures and reasoning that lead to a clarification of the concepts. Although the Self to be realized is partless, still many constituents are superimposed on It, such as the body, sense-organs, mind, intellect, perception of objects, etc. That being so, one false constituent may be discarded at one attempt at comprehension,and another at another. In this sense the dawn of a conception in a progressive manner becomes justifiable. But even this is only the penultimate stage of the realization of the Self. Those of sharp intellect on the other hand who have no obstruction like ignorance, doubt, and confusion, with regard to the object to be known can realize the meaning of 'That thou art' even from the first utterance, so that a repetition in their case is certainly useless. For the knowledge of the Self emerging once for all is able to remove ignorance and no progressive development is admitted here.130

The idea of the repetition of the threefold process is not meant for its own sake. There is no obligation to persist with it after <u>brahmajñāna</u> is conclusively gained. Such a feeling might distract from the imperative of understanding the <u>Vedānta-vākyas</u>.[131]

That <u>nididhyāsana</u> is identical with <u>brahmajñāna</u> and distinct from the concept of meditation as a probable means of knowledge is supported by Shankara's clear refutation of <u>Yoga</u> and its disciplines as a direct means to <u>brahmajñāna</u>.[132]

Commenting on Brahma-sūtra 2.1.3, Shankara justifies the need for a special rebuttal of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. This is necessary, he explains, because of the claim of Yoga to be a means to the knowledge of reality, and the references to this method in the Vedas.[133] The fact that these schools share some views and practices in common with Advaita does not justify their claim as independent paths to the knowledge of brahman.

> Though there is agreement in respect of a portion of the subject matter, still since disagreement is in evidence in respect of others, as shown above, an effort is being made against the Sāṁkhya and Yoga Smṛtis alone, though many Smṛtis dealing with spiritual matters are extant. For the Sāṁkhya and Yoga are well recognized in the world as means for the achievement of the highest human goal (liberation), and they are accepted by the good people and are supported by the Vedic indicatory marks, as in, 'One becomes freed from all the bondages after realizing the Deity that is the source of these desires and attained through Sāṁkhya and Yoga' (SV.U. 6.13). Their refutation centres only round this false claim that liberation can be attained through Sāṁkhya knowledge or the path of Yoga independently of the Vedas. For the Upaniṣads reject the claim that there can be anything apart from the Vedic knowledge of the unity of the Self that can bring about liberation, as is denied in, 'By knowing Him alone, one goes beyond death. There is no other path to proceed by' (SV.U. 3.8). But the followers of Sāṁkhya and Yoga are dualists, and they do not perceive the unity of the Self.134

The Sāṃkhya view of the quality-less nature of the purusha and the Yoga emphasis on detachment are only acceptable because they are harmonious with śruti's own revelations. Although these schools might be indirectly conducive to the gain of Self-knowledge, that knowledge itself, however, contends Shankara, can be had only from the texts of the Upanishads.[135] Although Shankara admits that extraordinary powers are attainable through Yoga practices,[136] he denies that the discipline of mind control or concentration is a means to freedom. The Upanishads, he says, do not prescribe

these as leading to moksha.[137] This is a denial therefore, of meditation as normally understood, as a means to brahmajñāna. In fact, Shankara sees mental control as being impossible without brahmajñāna and the continuous abiding of the mind in that knowledge.[138]

Elsewhere, Shankara argues that any perfection possible is attainable only through the practice of dharma and the latter is revealed exclusively in the injunctions of the Vedas.[139] Hence, the validity of a scriptural text cannot be overriden on the personal authority of someone who has attained perfection through the practice of it.[140] Besides, if one has to rely on the personal authority of adepts, there is a difficulty of contradictory assertions. These conflicts, according to Shankara, can only be resolved by a consideration of their agreement with the Vedas.[141] Like all other mental and physical disciplines outside of the Vedānta-vākyas, Yoga can assist the gain of knowledge by helping to bring about concentration and mental purity (citta-śuddhi).[142]

In current studies, the most often cited statement from Shankara in support of anubhava as a pramāṇa of brahman occurs in his commentary on the Brahma-sūtra. Here Shankara says that anubhava, etc., can be used as a means of inquiry about brahman.[143] In view of the significance attached to this statement, it is important that we examine the context in which it occurs.

The discussion in which Shankara expresses this view is

prompted by an objection that the second sūtra, "That (is Brahman) from which (are derived) the birth etc. of this universe", seeks to establish brahman by an inferential argument.[144] Shankara emphatically denies this view. The sūtras, he says, are meant for, "stringing together the flowers of the sentences of the Upanisads". They only cite and analyze the Vedānta-vākyas because,

> the realization of Brahman results from the firm conviction arising from the deliberation on the (Vedic) texts and their meanings, but not from other means of knowledge like inference etc.145

Having said this, Shankara adds that after brahman is revealed as the world-cause by the śruti, inferential arguments not opposed to the Upanisadic texts can be employed as a means of reinforcing these texts. The śruti itself, Shankara points out, in texts such as, '(The Self is) to be heard of, to be reflected on' (BR.U. 2.4.5), and, 'A man well informed and intelligent can reach the country of the Gāndhāras; similarly in this world, a man who has a teacher attains knowledge', prescribes and accepts the aid of human intelligence and reasoning.[146]

It is in the immediate context of suggesting a supplementary role for all other pramānas, that Shankara mentions anubhava as a means of knowledge. It is also significant that he adds "etc." after anubhava (anubhavādayaśca). This would suggest that no special significance is being attached to anubhava. The inevitable conclusion here is that anubhava is grouped along with all other pramāṇas whose roles are conceived by Shankara as

only subordinate and supplementary to śruti. There seems no justification from this discussion for the deliberate singling out of anubhava and the claim that it is the ultimate pramāṇa of brahman. The context and the development of the argument here does not vindicate such an interpretation.

Shankara clearly explains why it is possible to have supplementary pramāṇas in inquiring about brahman. In the case of the inquiry into dharma, for example, śruti alone can be employed, for the result is yet to be produced and is dependent on human effort. The result cannot be experienced prior to its production.[147] The inquiry into brahman, however, Shankara says, relates to an already existing entity and admits therefore, of the use of other pramāṇas.[148] The clear idea of the contrast which Shankara introduces here is to suggest that because brahman is not outside the range of one's knowledge and experience,[149] other pramāṇas are employable alongside śruti. Besides, anubhava here seems to be used in a very wide sense. It can include any experience which can be analyzed to support and reinforce the revelations of śruti. The analysis of the three states of experience and the demonstration of a persisting and unchanging Awareness are good examples of the supportive use of everyday experience.

The important point is that there are no grounds here or elsewhere for seeing any of these other sources of knowledge as independent or alternative means to brahmajñāna in

Shankara. This is reinforced in the course of the same discussion where an objection is raised that if *brahman* is an existing reality, it should be the object of other means of inquiry and *Upanishad* inquiry is futile. Shankara's reply leaves no room for doubt.

> Not so; for Brahman's relation with anything cannot be grasped, It being outside the range of sense perception. The senses naturally comprehend objects and not Brahman. Had Brahman been an object of sense-perception, knowledge would have been of the form, 'This product is related to (i.e., produced by) Brahman'. Again, even when the mere effect (i.e. universe) is cognized, one cannot ascertain whether it is related to Brahman (as its cause) or to something else. Therefore the aphorism, 'That from which' etc., is not meant to present an inference.150

The issue is put even further beyond doubt when Shankara says that the next *sūtra* (1.1.3), 'Since the scriptures are its valid means', is meant for establishing *śruti* as the only *pramāṇa* of *brahman*.[151] We are left with no choice, therefore, but to see this reference to *anubhava* in the same light as Shankara's mention of any other *pramāṇa* in relation to *śruti* and *brahmajnana*. It is difficult to accept that if Shankara wished to establish *anubhava* as the definitive *pramāṇa* of *brahman* he would have chosen to do so through this single reference. The direct revelation of *brahman* is the concern of *śruti* alone, but other methods of inquiry and reasoning can assist us in removing doubt and in understanding this revelation.

With this discussion, we bring to an end that part of our thesis dealing exclusively with Shankara's understanding of the *śruti* as a source of *brahmajñāna*. Our aim here was to reinforce the conclusions arrived at in Chapters 3 and 4, by studying Shankara's conception of the nature of *brahmajñāna* and the manner of its acquisiton.

We consider Shankara's distinction between jñāna (knowledge) and karma (activity), which is totally overlooked in contemporary discussions, to be fundamental in a correct understanding of his conception of śruti, and its direct role in producing brahmajñāna. This distinction is the basis of his differentiation between upāsanā or dhyāna (meditation) and jñāna. In dhyāna or upāsanā one is not concerned with gaining correct knowledge of an object. In the examples Shankara has given, the object meditated upon may be imagined or conceived in a manner different from its real nature. When, on the other hand, a decision is made to obtain knowledge (jñāna), there is no choice or question of conceiving the object differently from what it is. Jñāna, of any kind, is produced only by an appropriate pramāṇa, and in the case of brahman, the Vedānta-vākyas constitute the only valid pramāṇa.

We wish to strongly reiterate Shankara's clear conviction that the sentences of the Upanishads are concerned with imparting jñāna of an already available brahman and are not at all meant for dhyāna or upāsanā of the kinds mentioned by him. The simple point, perhaps missed because of this very simplicity, is that these sentences fulfil their purpose in being correctly understood. Whereas meditation is a mental activity concerned with the production of a hither-to non-existent result, jñāna informs us of already existing things. The Vedānta-vākyas tell us something about brahman, and that information, correctly understood, constitutes their aim. This conclusion is a challenge to the view that Shankara understands knowledge gathered from the śruti as

merely hypothetical. Śruti is not a pramāṇa if it fails to engender pramā (valid knowledge). We find it impossible therefore, to support the conclusion of de Smet and others, that even after grasping the purport of the śruti and eliminating all doubts, jñāna, in Shankara, still awaits further verification.[152] This is a very central and crucial issue on which we differ radically. De Smet, after a detailed and lucid discussion of Shankara's methods of exegesis, has missed the cardinal implication of his acceptance of śruti as the pramāṇa of brahmajñāna.

We find further support for our conclusions in the numerous passages where Shankara affirms the simultaneity of jñāna and moksha. His position is that between jñāna, conceived as a clear comprehension of the purport of the Upanishads, and moksha, there is no necessity for any kind of intervening activity. We wish here to emphasize his refutation of the contention that it is meditation, over and above the understanding of the meaning of the Vedānta-vākyas, which gives rise to knowledge capable of destroying avidyā. We have pointed to the identity of this pūrvapaksha with current views. Nothing more than the understanding of the nature of the Self and non-Self is required.

We suspect that one reason for the positing of anubhava as the pramāṇa of brahman is the wish to show that jñāna is not only a cognitive transformation but also carries the conviction of will and emotion. It is not necessary, however, to overturn Shankara's epistemology to make this point. The discussion on sādhana-catushṭaya was introduced to demonstrate

that the successful attainment of jñāna implied a transformation of intellect, will and emotion. These qualities are the prerequisites for inquiry into the śruti, and for the successful gain of jñāna. It is in the absence of these prerequisites that śruti-derived knowledge lacks conviction and immediacy. Śraddhā (faith) in the pramāṇa and in the teacher is a very significant attitude. One can be faithful to Shankara's epistemology and also demonstrate that jñāna implies a profound transformation of one's entire vision. Fitness to inquire into the śruti demands and presupposes a high level of moral attainment in the aspirant. Bhagavadgītā 13:6-11, enumerates a selection of such qualities, and summing up his bhāshya on these virtues, Shankara writes,

> Knowledge of truth results from the mature development of such attributes as (humility 13:7), which are the means of attaining knowledge. The end of this knowledge is moksha, the cessation of mortal existence, of samsara. The end should be kept in view; for, it is only when one perceives the end of knowledge of truth that one will endeavour to cultivate the attributes which are the means of attaining that knowledge. These attributes - from 'humility' to 'perception of the end of the knowledge of truth' - are declared to be knowledge because they are conducive to knowledge. What is opposed to this - viz., pride, hypocricy, cruelty, impatience, insincerity and the like - is ignorance, which should be known and avoided as tending to the perpetuation of samsara.153

In our discussion on śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana, we sought to refute the sharp distinctions made between them, and the claim that they are intended for different ends. All three processes, according to Shankara, have the same end in view. We have also argued that they do not necessarily follow each other in sequence. In the properly qualified aspirant, brahmajñāna can be gained in the initial śravaṇa. If this does not occur, it is not because this is not the aim of śravaṇa,

or that it is incapable of bringing about knowledge. The aspirant may lack any one of the qualities described in sādhana-catushṭaya. If there are any doubts about the pramāṇa or the prameya (object revealed), then manana is required for the elimination of these. Manana, however, does not seek to establish the truth of brahman by logic independent of the śruti. It only releases jñāna from doubts.

In our discussion of nididhyāsana, we sought to refute the view that it is conceived by Shankara as a special act of meditation which truly produces brahmajñāna. The habitual tendency of identifying the ātman with the mind, senses or body may reassert itself even after the gain of brahmajñāna. Nididhyāsana, as conceived by Shankara, is that process of continuous contemplation by which one seeks to uninterruptedly focus one's mind on the true nature of the Self, gleaned from the śruti. At this stage, valid knowledge is already gained, and the purpose of nididhyāsana is not to produce new knowledge. It is contemplation of the ātman as It is, having already ascertained Its nature from Its valid source. Its aim is to bring about firmness or steadiness (nishṭhā) in jñāna. Contrary to current views, it appears to us that śravaṇa, the process during which we correctly comprehend the nature of brahman, should be accorded primacy in Shankara.

In Part 2 of our study, we consider Vivekananda's understanding of the śruti and its role in the gain of brahmajñāna. We begin, however, with a discussion of certain general features of his times, and the legacy of attitudes toward the śruti which he inherited from his immediate predecessors.

PART TWO

CHAPTER 6

ATTITUDES TOWARD SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY AND REVELATION FROM RAMMOHUN ROY TO RAMAKRISHNA

6.1 The British Impact

In its long history, Hinduism has undergone innumerable changes and has responded and adapted itself to diverse influences. The most important challenge and stimulus it has encountered is the presence and impact of the West. The response to this impact effected changes of the most radical kind, and the present form of Hinduism can only be properly understood in the light of this historic meeting. It is not, however, within the scope of our study to consider all the dimensions of this encounter but to focus only on its effects in relation to the authority and status of the Vedas.

The uniqueness of the impact of the West on Hinduism is easily appreciated when one considers the marginal effects of Islam, in spite of a coexistence extending over seven hundred years. The reason lies, of course, in the nature of Islamic rule. Islamic dominance in many parts of India was primarily political and military. Their efforts at conversion were sporadic and there was no attempt to challenge the religion, philosophy or social life of the Hindus. The

Islamic state did not set up an educational system. This is not to argue that both civilizations did not influence each other. The point is that the beliefs and institutions of Hinduism were not interfered with nor were their assumptions challenged by Islam. In fact, as K.M. Panikkar points out, the general effect of the Islamic impact was a greater withdrawal into religious and social rigidity and orthodoxy.

> So far as Hindu Society was considered, the impact of Islam seems on the whole to have made it more rigid. A study of the extensive smriti literature of the Muslim period including the encylopaedic Todarananda, composed under the orders of Akbar's famous Revenue Minister, Raja Toder Mal would clearly demonstrate that Hinduism, far from liberalising itself under the impact of Islam, became stricter in its observations of rituals and caste rules, placing more emphasis on the prayaschitta, or the religious penances for social offences. Briefly, therefore, it may be said that the encounter between Islam and Hinduism became, after a short time, a problem of co-existence, with mutual toleration rather than the domination of one by another.1

The challenges to Hinduism have not only originated outside its borders. The bhakti movement of medieval times vented ideas of religious and social reform, later echoed in the reformist movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They asserted that God was not embodied in a material object and that man had direct access to salvation without the mediation of priests. Most of the bhakti adherents were fervent monotheists and the doctrine of direct access to salvation through bhakti offered dignity and equality to all who had been denied full participation in religious life under orthodox Brahmanism. They were inevitably anti-caste and women were considered spiritually equal by many of them and admitted to the inner ranks of disciples.

The bhakti movement, however, failed to effect widespread changes in the beliefs and institutions of orthodox Hinduism. Many reasons explain this failure.[2] Equality was an ideal of the religious and not the secular sphere. While criticizing certain social practices, the movements offered no alternative programme of social and economic reorganization. In fact, they never built up organizations which could carry out positive social programmes. The saints of bhakti were of a pacific turn of mind, tolerant in outlook and eschewed controversy or conflict. Social reform was peripheral to the reconstitution of religious beliefs. Most of the sects fostered an other-wordly attitude to life. Heimsath sees this as a result of their emphasis on mysticism.

> But it was not the primacy of spiritual concerns alone that caused the bhakti movements to fail in the transformation of social life; religious movements have been known to overturn social structures. Most bhakti sects, like other Hindu religious movements, leaned towards mysticism, as a method of spiritual revelation, and this often encouraged a drawing away from wordly concerns. Individual salvation, not the salvation of society or the group, was the reason for and the result of the religious quest through mysticism.3

The British challenge, in contrast to Hinduism's earlier encounters with other civilizations and cultures, was total. The main challenge of the West was in respect of the religion of the Hindus. The missionaries questioned the validity of Hinduism and denounced it as a mass of superstitions. It was condemned as idolatrous and polytheistic. Social customs for which religious legitimation was claimed invoked the severest disapproval. These included such practices as the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, infant marriages, compulsory widowhood and the institution of caste with the acceptance of untouchability. The structure of

Hinduism was challenged by the concept of equality which became part of the legal system. Economically, India's handicraft industry was subjected to the pressures of industrialization, and politically the divisions and fragmentations of Indian society were challenged by the British sense of community and nationalistic pride. The British, in other words, offered an observable, functioning and successful alternative to her own system. There were economic, social, religious and intellectual alternatives presented by the West.

The Western impact on India, which resulted in what is now quite commonly referred to as the Indian Renaissance, transmitted itself to the Indians through English education, the preaching of Christian missionaries and the research work of Orientalists. The first great impetus to English education was the establishment in Calcutta of the Hindu College in 1817. A large number of schools and colleges were founded during the next forty years in Bengal and in other parts of India, creating a small but influential English-educated class. The spread of English as an all-India language, along with improved transport, facilitated communication and the spread of ideas from one part of the country to another. Among the writers most influential in shaping Indian thinking around this time were Mill, Comte, and Spencer. Mill's political writings, in which he argued that social tyranny might be more oppressive than political subjugation, and his arguments in favour of female equality were well known. With Comte, it was his effort to discover, "laws of progress". He argued that the key to progress was

moral development leading to altruism; moral development depended on religion. Comte also insisted on the necessity for female equality. Indians were also inspired by Spencer's ideas of evolution as applied to human society, showing that social change was a natural process which could be guided by men, that violent breaks with the past were unnecessary, and that ultimate progress was certain . Spencer's writings were translated into the major Indian languages, reaching a wide audience.[4] The significance of these philosophies was the emphasis on reason rather than tradition and authority as the factor in determining the norms and values of society. The objective assessment of tradition was encouraged. The Christian missionaries were among the leading vehicles of Western ideas and concepts. Their scathing criticisms of Hindu doctrine and practice were a major impetus to religious reform and revaluation. Some of their more specific influences will be discussed subsequently. They were influential also in a positive manner through their example in education, welfare work, uplift of the backward classes and female emancipation.

The contribution of the Orientalists is well documented and accepted.[5] In the history of Indology, the names of Jones, Wilson and Colebrooke are legendary. Jones related Hindu civilization to that of Europe by linking Sanskrit to the European language family, and reanimated the idea of a golden age in the past. The golden age concept was given further shape by the work of Colebrooke. He argued that the West owed a debt of gratitude to the East for their contributions in the arts and sciences. Civilisation, which had its origin

in Asia, was now in a state of decline there whereas the West was steadily progressing. He concentrated his research upon the Vedic Age of India characterizing it as an age of gold and comparing it with present decline. He demonstrated from textual sources that the practice of satī was a departure from the authentic tradition and discovered many other discrepancies between ancient texts and actual practices. Colebrooke romanticized the virtues of the Aryan inhabitants of North India, describing their worship as a non-idolatrous monotheistic faith, free from the fertility goddesses, rites and rituals of contemporary Hinduism. Wilson, unlike Jones and Colebrooke, concentrated his efforts on translating, describing and analyzing the Purāṇas. In contrast to Colebrooke, who was harsh in his judgement and evaluation of all post-Vedic developments in Hinduism, Wilson argued, "that it was neither necessary nor desirable, and was perhaps even absurd, to eliminate traits that through the ages had become deeply ingrained in Hindu culture".[6] His work, as Kopf suggests, linked contemporary traditions with their "historically authenticated pristine forms". The Orientalist conception of the golden age directly influenced the reformist arguments of men like Rammohun Roy and was perhaps their greatest contribution.

> Knowledge of this golden age would become the cohesive ideology underlying a new sense of community. It is doubtful that the rise of nationalism would have been possible without the sense of community, the sense of community without a collective feeling of self-respect, and self-respect without the stimulus of a rediscovered golden age.[7]

The Indian Renaissance had effects of the most far-reaching kind, touching almost every aspect of Indian life.

It set up a high standard of rational thinking, leading to religious and social reform and developed the political ideas and institutions which led eventually to the freedom of India. Its chief effect, relevant to the authority and status of the Vedas, was the growth of the spirit of criticism. Majumdar argues that this spirit of inquiry and criticism is the most important result of the impact of Western culture on India.[8] The claim of the Vedas to be an infallible revelation was questioned and its authoritativeness and role eventually redefined. This change, as will be shown later, had serious consequences for the understanding of the specific role of these texts and of Hinduism in general.[9] It will be argued that the reinterpretation of their meaning which the texts underwent in this period eventually came to be accepted, for various reasons, as the true and original role they had always been assigned. One of the important consequences of this acceptance was a remarkable change in the understanding and interpretation of Shankara's Advaita Vedānta.

A study centred on any aspect of this fervent period in the history of Hinduism must inevitably concern itself in a large measure with the Brahmo Samaj. This study is no exception. From the days of Rammohun Roy until the death of Keshub Chandra Sen in 1884, the Brahmo Samaj, although numerically small, was the centre of all progressive religious, social and political movements and exerted considerable influence. The movement produced a series of charismatic leaders who determined its doctrine and direction.[10]

6.2 Rammohun Roy

Rammohun Roy (1774-1833) is the acknowledged pioneer of the Indian Renaissance. He was born in an orthodox Hindu Brahmin family and his early education in Persian and Arabic was intended to prepare him for a career in the Muslim administration. He also learnt Sanskrit and had a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. During the years 1806 to 1814, when he worked with the East India Company, he acquired a considerable command over the English language. He settled in Calcutta in 1815 and involved himself in the campaign for religious and social reform, establishing the Brahmo Sabha in 1828.[11] Roy died on September 27th, 1833, at Bristol, while on a visit to England.

The question of the significance of scriptural revelation is important in respect of Rammohun Roy, for the reason that his work on religion consists largely of attempting to interpret the scriptures to people who considered the texts to be of divine origin and infallible. Opinions are divided among modern scholars on Roy's real attitude to scriptural authority. S.K. Das is doubtful whether Roy really believed in the inspiration of the Vedas.[12] On the other hand, B.G. Ray sees Roy as a champion of Vedic infallibility.[13] Ray's opinion is shared by S. Mitra. He sees the Vedas as the authoritative basis of Hindu theism for Rammohun Roy.[14] According to Mitra, the Vedas were for Roy,

> extremely luminous works, affirmed to be co-eval with the creation and containing the whole body of Hindu Theology, Law and literature.15

The difficulty of ascertaining his true position on the scripture arises from his tendency to use texts which he himself did not necessarily uphold but which his opponents did. He preferred to avoid questioning the authoritativeness of the scripture in his controversies with Hindu opponents.[16] Rammohun, like all other Brahmo Samaj leaders, was not a theologian, and his purpose was not to provide a completely rounded, consistent theology. He had an abiding interest in social reform. It is difficult, however, to agree with Mitra and Ray that Roy upheld without reservations the traditional authority of the Vedas and their absolute infallibility. There is a strong case for modifying this view.[17]

Rammohun Roy saw the Vedas as directing man's attention to the regular and orderly operation of the natural world,

enabling him thereby to form a concept of the Creator.

> The Vedas (or properly speaking the spiritual parts of them)...recommend mankind to direct all researches towards the surrounding objects, viewed either collectively or individually, bearing in mind their regular, wise and wonderful combinations and arrangements, since such researches cannot fail, they affirm, to lead an unbiased mind to the notion of a Supreme Existence, who so sublimely designs and disposes of them, as is everywhere traced through the universe.18

It is very significant that in this view the Vedas do not themselves give certain knowledge of God, but point to the means by which such knowledge may be gained. There is a shift here in the nature of traditional scriptural authority. It is interesting to note that Roy expresses an idea which becomes very important in later Brahmo doctrine. This is the notion that nature provides the basis for a particular type of revelation. This idea features prominently in the thought

of Keshub Chandra Sen and will be explored more fully when he is treated.

For Rammohun Roy, the criterion by which the authoritativeness of any text may be evaluated is whether or not it teaches the "true" religion. This view enabled him to accept as authoritative, texts of the Hindu tradition other than the Vedas. In this sense it is difficult to argue that the Vedas were for him a unique and incomparable source of knowledge.

> If the spiritual part of the Vedas can enable men to acquire salvation by teaching them the true and eternal existence of God, and the false and perishable being of the universe, and inducing them to hear and constantly reflect on these doctrines it is consistent with reason to admit, that the Smriti, and Agam, and other works inculcating the same doctrines, afford means of attaining final beautitude.19

One may add that it is also consistent with reason and the logic of his thought, that the texts of other traditions inculcating the "true" religion, would also be accepted as authoritative. There is no reason to suppose that this view would have been disagreeable to him. His wide sympathies with Christian and Islamic thought are well known. This, of course, further erodes the uniqueness of the Vedas. The view that a text is authoritative only if it teaches the "true" religion implies that Roy has an extra-scriptural concept of right doctrine which he brings to bear in his evaluation of any text. In his earliest known work, a Persian tract entitled, Tuḥfat al-Muwaḥḥidīn (A Gift to Monotheists) 1803-4, Rammohun outlines a minimal theology common to all religions.[20] These include the existence of God, derivable from the design of the universe and man's innate capacity

to infer God from it, and a morally accountable soul existing after death, a belief necessary for the maintenence of social order. The minimal moral principle was a concern for the welfare of mankind. These basic beliefs were contrasted with the doctrinal diversity of historical religions and they were seen as the converging points of all traditions. Here is the germ of the idea of the unity of all religions, which in various forms became a prominent feature of Hindu thought in the modern period.

A very important clue to Roy's attitude to the Vedas emerges in his contrast with Shankara on the question of adhikāra (entitlement). Roy differs from Shankara in upholding the view that householders and not only samnyāsins are entitled to the knowledge of brahman. The question of whether śūdras are able to know brahman is related to the question of the indispensability of the Vedas for a knowledge of brahman. Shankara, who argues for the indispensability of the Vedas as a source of knowledge of brahman, sees the śūdras, who are debarred from Vedic study, as not being entitled to this knowledge. Rammohun Roy, however, in a dispute with one Subrahmanya Sastri, argues that the knowledge of the Vedas is not necessary for a knowledge of God, wrongly citing Shankara's support for this view.[21] As far as Roy was concerned, the entitlement of people to true or inferior forms of religion was not determined by formal qualifications of birth or ritual status, but by inclination and ability.

It is clear then, that although Rammohun Roy did not unambiguously reject Vedic authority and infallibility, he had a considerably modified attitude to it. He never worked out a cohesive theology, but if he had, it is difficult to see how he could have consistently maintained the traditional exclusiveness of the Vedas. His view of nature as revelation, his extra-scriptural concept of a type of minimal theology, his idea that religious truth is not confined to the texts of the Vedas, and his argument that knowledge of the latter is not necessary for a knowledge of God, all mollify the age-old attitudes towards the Vedas. It is also relevant to note that Roy adopted an extremely critical view of Biblical texts, expunging matters he felt to be irrational. He sometimes argued, in fact, that the Vedic texts themselves and not only the interpretations of them must be subjected to rational analysis.[22] Rammohun Roy did not lay down a detailed set of doctrines for the Brahmo Samaj, but his general approach certainly influenced the theological evolution of the movement and its formulation of a definite stance towards the Vedas.

In this context, it is interesting to examine the conclusions of two subsequent leaders of the Brahmo Samaj on Roy's approach to the Vedas. Sivanath Sastri, who joined the movement in the early eighteen sixties, partnered Keshub Chandra Sen in the break with Debendranath Tagore in 1866, and became the spiritual leader of the revolt against Keshub in 1878, is critical of Roy's use of the Vedas. He sees Roy's reliance on the texts as vitiating his protest against idolatry. Over seventy-five years after Rammohun's

death in England, Sastri writes,

> Proceeding on the strict lines of the Shastras, he could not but concede to his adversaries that the old scriptures tolerated idolatrous practices as an inferior kind of culture necessary for the ignorant and innocuous in the case of the wise. The admission of this principle largely neutralized the effects of his earnest protest against the idolatry of his countrymen; and as a consequence the Brahmo Samaj long remained only as a meeting place of a number of educated and influential persons who intellectually sympathised with the doctrine of monotheism, but practically adhered to all the idolatrous rites in private life.23

Keshub Chandra Sen is very critical of the exclusion of all but brahmins from hearing the recitation of the Vedas, during the services of the Samaj in Roy's time. It was an inconsistent anomaly in his eyes and militated against the universalistic ideals of the church.[24] In spite of Keshub's suspicions about Rammohun's reverence for the Vedas and his censuring of the Hindu image which the Samaj projected under Roy's guidance, he warns against concluding that Roy maintained an orthodox view of the texts.

> We must not however rush to the extreme of supposing that Ram Mohun Roy was a thorough Vedantist, and that he offered implicit obedience to the authority of the Vedas as the infallible scriptures of God. All that we could gather from his published writings tends to prove that his idea of revelation was catholic, that he measured the inspiration of the so-called scriptures by the truths which they inculcated. Hence he attached great value and importance to the Christian scriptures, and he published a compilation entitled, "The precepts of Jesus, the guide to Happiness", for the welfare of his countrymen. We are therefore led to the inference that Ram Mohun Roy availed himself of the authority of the Vedas for emancipating his countrymen from the yoke of Puranic idolatry, not from an absolute belief of those ancient books having come from God himself, but on account of the sublime truths they set forth with all the weight of acknowledged authority on the unity of the Godhead and the spirituality of true worship.25

6.3 Debendranath Tagore

The watershed in the attitude of the Brahmo Samaj to the Vedas came under the leadership of Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905). A definite stand was taken and the infallibility of the Vedas formally rejected. This was perhaps the turning-point also in the general status of these texts in the ensuing history of modern Hinduism.[26] Debendranath was born in Calcutta in 1817. He received his early education in a school founded by Rammohun Roy. In 1834 he obtained admission to the Hindu College where he spent about four years, before joining his father, Dwarkanath Tagore, a close associate of Rammohun Roy, in the family business.[27] Debendranath was of a contemplative turn of mind and the death of his grandmother, to whom he was deeply attached, aroused in him deep sorrow and an aversion to wealth and enjoyment. A chance encounter with the Īśā Upanishad brought relief to his inner turmoil, and with great zeal he took up the study of the Upanishads. In 1839 Debendranath founded the Tattvabodhini Sabha for propagating the ideas of the Upanishads. To carry out the objectives of the Sabha, the Tattvabodhini Pathsala, a school for the training of the young, was established in 1840, and a monthly journal, the Tattvabodhini Patrika, started in 1843.

Akshaykumar Datta, who proved to be an important influence on Debendranath and indeed on the whole movement, was a teacher at this school and editor of the journal. The relations between the vigorous Sabha and the Samaj, which was in a state of decline after Roy's departure for England, were extremely close. The Tattvabodhini Sabha served as the organizational wing of the Brahmo Samaj, finally merging

with the latter in 1859.[28] The assumption of leadership by Debendranath initiated a new phase in the growth of the Samaj. There was a rapid increase in the power and influence of the Brahmo movement. New rituals and ceremonies were added, the most important being a special form of initiation for membership.

Debendranath followed Rammohun Roy in his belief that original Hinduism was a spiritual theism and that the Upanishads were its source. The spark that led to a change of this view was ignited, strangely enough, as a result of controversy over missionary proselytization. In 1845, the Hindus of Calcutta were aroused and incensed by the conversion to Christianity of Umesh Chandra Sarkar and his young wife, and a movement in opposition to Dr. Alexander Duff's school, where Umesh was a student, was launched. Duff's work on India and Indian Missions, which appeared at that time, was assailed in the pages of the Tattvabodhini Patrika. Duff responded by denouncing the doctrines of the Samaj in the Calcutta Review, fixing his fury on the idea of the infallibility of the Vedas.[29] The initial response of the Samaj was to defend the concept.

> We will not deny that the reviewer is correct in remarking that we consider the Vedas and the Vedas alone, as the authorized rule of Hindu theology. They are the sole foundation of all our beliefs and the truths of all other Shastras must be judged of according to their agreement with them. What we consider as revelation is contained in the Vedas alone; and the last part of our holy Scriptures treating of the final dispensation of Hinduism forms what is called Vedanta.30

This categorical public declaration of adherence to Vedic infallibility soon provoked dissent and unease within the Samaj and also found expression in its columns. Akshaykumar

Datta, the editor of the Tattvabodhini Patrika was the leading dissident, and it is generally accepted that it was under his influence that Debendranath and the Samaj discarded the notion of infallibility.

It is important to briefly consider Datta's religious views, because his linking of religion and science became a constantly reiterated theme throughout the period, and salient in Vivekananda's thought. His notion of natural religion was also prominent.[31] Datta (1820-1886) posited a deistic concept of God as the supreme watchmaker, who created a purposeful universe. God's plan for the universe is apprehended through the discovery of natural laws which reveal the unity and interrelatedness of all phenomena. The approach to God was not through worship or monism but through the study of the natural sciences. A complete understanding of these natural laws or "God's scripture" reveals the harmony of all things. The logic of this thinking led him to reject Vedānta as the revealed source of the Brahmo Samaj. Because of his belief in natural laws, he felt that the emphasis in the Brahmo Samaj should be less on national character and more on the religious impulses common to all men. In this way it could offer itself to the world as a scientifically constructed natural religion. In his own way, Datta was developing the embryonic theme of Rammohun which was further enlarged by Keshub. Sastri is of the opinion that Datta's arguments against Vedic infallibility had wide support in the Samaj.[32]

As part of his effort to ascertain the truth of the issue,

Debendranath sent four Brahmin youths to Benares to study the Vedas. His own visit to that city in 1847 was partly in pursuit of the same inquiry.[33] In 1850 the doctrine of infallibility was finally abolished.[34] In order, however, to keep the movement along the lines of Upanishadic monotheism, Debendranath published in 1850 a compilation of carefully selected passages from the Upanishads entitled, Brahmo Dharma. Perhaps the main cause which led Debendranath to the final rejection of the authority of the Upanishads was his refusal to accept those passages proclaiming the identity of ātman and brahman. Earlier, Rammohun Roy had also refused to accept this identification. He preferred to treat brahman as the Lord and Regulator of the cosmos, related to the soul as Its superintendent. Both the soul and the universe depend on God for existence.[35] In a revealing passage of his autobiography, worthy of being quoted in full, Debendranth writes,

> How strange. Formerly I did not know of the existence of this thorny tangle of Upanisads: only eleven Upanisads were known to me, with the help of which I started the propagation of Brahma Dharma, making its foundation. But now I saw that even this foundation was shaky and built upon sand; even here I did not touch firm ground. First I went back to the Vedas, but could not lay the foundation of the Brahma Dharma there, then I came back to the eleven authentic Upanisads,[36] but how unfortunate, even there I could not lay the foundation. Our relation with God is that of worshipper and worshipped-this is the very essence of Brahmoism. When we found the opposite conclusion to this arrived at in Shankaracharya's Sarirak mimamsa of the Vedanta Darsana we could no longer place any confidence in it; nor could we accept it as a support of our religion. I had thought that if I renounced the Vedanta Darsana and accepted the eleven Upanisads only, I would find support for Brahmanism, hence I had relied entirely upon these, leaving aside all else. But when in the Upanisads I came across, 'I am He' and 'Thou art That', then I became disappointed in them also.37

Here, one feels, is perhaps the real clue to his rejection of scriptural infallibility.

Henceforth, the non-authoritative status of any text became enshrined in the creed of the Brahmo Samaj. This was a tenet adamantly and inflexibly upheld through all the fragmentations of the movement in later years.[38] In the absence of any authoritative standard of doctrine, nature and intuition became the twin sources of knowledge.[39] The basis of Brahmoism became, "the pure heart filled with the light of intuitive knowledge".[40] Debendranath became increasingly reliant on personal intuition as his authority and the concept of divine command (ādeśa) played an important part in his life. It was also to become an unquestionable source of authority with Keshub Chandra Sen. The idea of intuitive experience as an immediate source of spiritual knowledge, which rose to prominence at this time, became a leading idea of the period, and has become a dominant motif in the rhetoric of modern Hinduism. In Vivekananda, it became associated with the idea of a scientific method of arriving at religious verification.

The rejection of the Vedas as revealed texts paved the way for an even more rigorous questioning of accepted articles of religious belief and intensified the clamour for social reform. Debendranath's more conservative approach to the latter led to the first splinter in the Samaj. The decision to reject scriptural authority was not entirely accepted without protest. Rajnarian Bose, for example, an early associate of Tagore, was not pleased with the decision and left the employ of Debendranath.[41] The strongest voice of protest, however, came from Sitanath Tattvabhusan, who joined the movement under Keshub Chandra Sen in 1871, and

later broke with him to become a member of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Sitanath saw the weakness of the movement in its lack of any systematic theology. It is extremely interesting also that all efforts of the Brahmo Samaj to establish and maintain a regular theological school ended in failure.[42] Sitanath, with remarkable insight, saw the tenuous and feeble basis of the appeals to natural religion and intuition and the impossibility of arriving at any philosophical consensus through these.[43] The rejection of the Vedas by Debendranath, he felt, had led to a neglect of the scriptures and positively discouraged scholarship. He wanted a movement back to the Upanishadic-based Vedānta. Unfortunately, voices like Sitanath's, appealing for systematization, refinement and clarity of doctrine were solitary ones. Within the movement itself Sitanath was decried as an advocate of barren intellectualism and scholasticism. He was branded as a reactionary who wanted to abolish the spontaneity of the religious life and suspend the right to private judgement.[44] The opposition to any systematic and methodical approach to doctrine went hand in hand with the accentuation of the importance of the intuitive experience. It is another legacy to modern Hinduism, where the emphasis is very often upon the lack of a necessity for any belief in doctrine or dogma. This was an outstanding argument in Vivekananda's presentation of Hinduism to the West.

Debendranath, as mentioned before, adopted a very conservative attitude on questions of social reform. In fact, he saw the mission of the Brahmo Samaj as a narrowly defined religious one, and felt that in matters of social

reform, individual tastes and inclinations should prevail. This approach conflicted with the demands of the younger and radically-minded members of the Samaj and led to the first split in 1866. This group wanted the movement to actively promote inter-caste marriage and widow re-marriage. They were opposed to the wearing of the sacred thread. There was also a division of opinion over the quality and extent of female education, many of the younger members advocating the ideal of complete social equality. In the vanguard of this progressive party was Keshub Chandra Sen (1838-1884).

6.4 Keshub Chandra Sen

Sen was born in a Vaishnava family of Calcutta and educated at the Hindu College. Keshub's western education had eroded his childhood religious beliefs and created a void which left him restless and searching. He sought solace in Unitarian philosophy and the writings of Theodore Parker and established the Goodwill Fraternity in 1857. It was at a gathering of this society in the same year that he first met Debendranath. There was a mutual attraction and Keshub was soon active in the Brahmo Samaj. He was an enthusiastic worker and largely responsible for the reinvigoration of the movement and its attraction to the young. His tour in 1864 to the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay facilitated the expansion of the Samaj as an all-India movement. After the schism in 1866 he became the leader of the Brahmo Samaj of India. The section under

Debendranath called itself the Adi (Original) Brahmo Samaj.

In Keshub's eyes, the rejection of the Vedas as inspired texts was a grand step in the evolution of the Samaj. Before this, it was simply revivalist in intention. In a sermon delivered during his English visit at the Mill-Hill Chapel in Leeds on August 28th, 1870, Keshub contrasted the two stages of the Brahmo Samaj.

> For twenty years the movement was carried on in that spirit, based all the time upon the national Scriptures of the Hindoos. The same God that lifted this noble band of Hindoos out of the darkness of superstition and idolatry, the same God, led them further onward and heavenward, until they gave up completely and thoroughly the doctrine of the inspiration of the Vedas. They took a broader and more unexceptionable basis; they went into their own hearts in order to hear the voice of God, and they went forth throughout the amplitudes of nature in order to study in silence the direct revelation of God's spirit. Thus the Hindoo Pantheists became Hindoo Theists. They embraced pure monotheism, such as was not confined to Hindoo books, to the Scriptures of their own countrymen, but was to be found in human nature in all the races and tribes and nations in the world.45

Keshub wanted to sever all links between the Brahmo Samaj of India and Hinduism. The Hindu image of the movement under Debendranath was a point of contention. When the Brahmo Samaj of India proposed in 1872 a Marriage Reform Bill, the Adi Samaj argued that the bill would lead to the separation of the Brahmos from the general body of Hindus. Keshub interestingly countered this by rejoining that Brahmos were already not Hindus, using non-belief in the Vedas as the dividing line.[46]

Of all the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, Keshub has left the largest legacy of speeches and writings, some of which contain very clear pronouncements on the nature of revelation

and sources of religious knowledge. The problem with Keshub, as with other Brahmo leaders, is the unsystematic and often contradictory quality of his thought, a reflection perhaps of the paradoxical times in which they lived.[47]

In a lecture delivered at the Town Hall in Calcutta on September 28th, 1866, Keshub propounds what amounts to be a general theory of revelation.[48] According to Keshub, the primary and ordinary revelation of God, accessible and intelligible to all, is His self-evident manifestation in nature.

> The universe exhibits on all sides innumerable marks of design and beauty, of adaptation and method, which we cannot explain except by referring them to an Intelligent First Cause, the Creator of this vast universe. Each object in nature reminds us of its Maker, and draws the heart in spontaneous reverence to His infinite majesty.49

Nature, however, does not only reveal God as her Creator, comparable to a watchmaker who has invested his object with independent powers of functioning. It also reveals His immanent function of sustaining and preserving and His goodness in supplying daily needs.

> Behold the Supreme Creator and Ruler of the universe - infinite in wisdom, power and goodness - immanent in matter, upholding it, and quickening all its movements, and mercifully dispensing joy and blessings to all His children. Such is the revelation of nature.50

In two lectures delivered the following year at the Calcutta Brahmo School, Keshub repeats this argument. Here however, he distinguishes between the importance of external nature and internal nature as sources of theological knowledge, and as an example of the inconsistency of his thinking, external nature is here undervalued as a type of revelation.

> There is nothing in matter itself, not even all the power and wisdom it manifests, which can lead us to the True God, whose spiritual nature, intelligence, personality, and holiness can only be deduced from the facts of our consciousness.51

Here, as the quotation suggests, the mind is eulogised as the instrument of revelation. Theology, Keshub claims here, is essentially dependent on psychology, and the doctrines and arguments of religion are derived primarily from the constitution of the human mind.

> The value and importance of the mind as an object of speculation through which we obtain a knowledge of the fundamental principles and main arguments of religion cannot be over-estimated. To what source are we to refer but to the human mind for our ideas of God, immortality and duty, and where do we seek for their proof but in the mind?52

It is obvious that Keshub was not consistent in the significance which he attributed to the different forms of revelation. After the revelation of God in nature, the next in Keshub's typology is what he calls, God in history. History, he contends, is not the mere chronicle of past events, but if read properly is full of religious significance displaying the workings of Providence. The manner in which God reveals Himself in history is through "Great Men".[53]

> For what is history but the record of the achievements of those extraordinary personages who appear from time to time and lead mankind? and what is it that we read therein but the biography of such men?. .It is through these great men, these leaders of mankind, that God reveals Himself to us in history: in short, they constitute what we mean by "God in history".54

He sees "Great Men" as the apostles and missionaries of God, owing their talents and success not to personal exertions, but to an inherently superior constitution endowed by God. Keshub is scrupulous, however, in distinguishing his "Great Men" theory from the Hindu notion of the avatāra and the Christian concept of incarnation.[55] With

him, it is not a case of the perfection of divinity embodied in a mortal frame, the God of the universe in a human body. It is God manifest in man, "not God made man but God in man". These extraordinary men, who are representative of their country and age and also of specific ideas, are born as a result of a moral necessity in times of crisis and turmoil. They are characterized by originality of wisdom, sincerity, invincible power and selflessness.[56] Christ commands a special regard from Keshub, but he pleads for reverence and honour to all dispensations.

> And though Jesus Christ, the Prince of Prophets, effected greater wonders, and did infinitely more good to the world than the others, and deserves therefore our profoundest reverence, we must not neglect that chain, or any single link in that chain, of prophets that preceded him, and prepared the world for him; nor must we refuse honour to those who, coming after him, have carried on the blessed work of human regeneration for which he lived and died.57

In comparison with the final and highest category of revelation, the first two types, according to Keshub, are merely external. Inspiration, is the loftiest. It is direct communion with the spirit of God, vouchsafed only through His mercy, and its effect on the human person are total. It is in Keshub's own words,

> the direct breathing-in of God's spirit - which infuses an altogether new life into the soul, and exalts it above all that is earthly and impure. It is more powerful, being God's direct and immediate action on the human soul, while the revelation made through physical nature and biography is indirect and mediate.58

It is very significant that in this lecture, where we are provided with Keshub's most detailed statements pertaining to revelation, no mention is made of any text and scripture as revelation, as these have no place in his scheme.

There are three tendencies in Keshub's writings and lectures which have very important implications for our study of the changing status of scriptural authority and for our understanding of salient orientations in modern Hinduism. The first of these is his powerful invective against the importance of dogma and doctrine. These were seen to relate to intellectual cognition, reasoning and logical thought, all of which were cold and lifeless, in contrast to the "fire of inspiration" and "direct communion with God". The former processes had nothing to do with the attainment of salvation. The following quotation will suffice, as it is typical of his outbursts on this point.

> Do not preach to me dogmas and traditions; talk not of saving my soul by mere theological arguments and inferences. These I do not want; I want the living God, that I may dwell in Him, away from the battle of the world.59

It is interesting to compare Keshub's aversion for doctrine with his criticism of Rammohun Roy, only three years earlier. In this article Keshub is reviewing the growth of the Samaj and its structure under Roy's leadership. Compare the following quotation with the one above.

> The creed was of no consequence, unity in faith was not demanded except only in the idea of the Godhead; community of worship was all in all; such a baseless and incomplete system cannot last long: worship must be sustained by knowledge and faith and love, congregational worship must find its life in community of dogmatic faith. This is an inevitable moral necessity.60

The second tendency, a direct consequence of the first, is his repudiation of all forms of authority, a type of spiritual anarchism. The claim was made that the Samaj was free from teachers, priests, books, ceremonies and rites.[61] The third, and most important tendency in his thought, is his stress on direct perception as the means for gaining spiritual knowledge,

foreshadowing an argument that rose to prestigious significance in Vivekananda. Keshub sees the direct perception approach as a most familiar topic of the Upanishads.

> No expression is more frequently used in the Upanishads than the "perception" of God (darshan). It appears that Hindu sages, not content with intellectual conceptions of the Almighty or abstract contemplation of certain Divine attributes, sought earnestly and indeed successfully, to behold the Supreme Spirit directly and to apprehend Him as a distinct and vivid Reality in their inner consciousness.62

This certainty, Keshub contends, which arises from the direct perception or realization of reality, is comparable to the assuredness arising from the sensual apprehension of objects around us. It is a self-evident truth, the only satisfactory kind of proof.

> The Real God is seen as plainly as we see ourselves and the world. We must place our belief in God upon direct evidence or eyesight. I will apply the same demonstration in reference to God as we do to material objects. All arguments a priori or a posteriori are feeble.63

In 1878, the Brahmo Samaj underwent its second schism. This time the rebellion was against Keshub and the causes were many.[64] It is interesting that many of the issues which provoked the first rift were still very much alive, and on this occasion Keshub was the accused. Sen's ideas on female education and emancipation were seen as being retrograde. He was opposed to university education for women and their exposure to subjects like mathematics, philosophy and science. He feared that they would lose their sexual identity. He refused the demand of some members that their wives should be at their sides during Samaj services. There was opposition also to Keshub's authoritarian management of affairs and a demand for constitutional government and

public control of the Samaj property. There was a deep suspicion about Keshub's own perception of his role in the movement and the attitude of hero worship which was growing around him. Keshub was giving increasing prominence to the idea of having received a special dispensation from God and the fact that his decisions with regard to the movement were above question, being motivated by ādeśa (divine command).[65]

From 1875 onwards, Keshub began to emphasize the importance of asceticism in the religious life, giving prominence to meditation and withdrawal from the world. The social reform and welfare-oriented activities of the movement fell into neglect. The issue, however, which finally precipitated the split, was Keshub's consent to the marriage between his eldest daughter and the young Maharaja of Cooch Behar, in violation of the principles of the Marriage Act of 1872, and in spite of considerable protest within the Samaj. Both had not attained the marriageable age stipulated by the Act, and the rites were non-Brahmo. The schism led to the formation on May 15th, 1878, of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. One year later Keshub inaugurated the Nava Vidhan or New Dispensation.

The launching of the New Dispensation was motivated by Keshub's conviction that he was inspired by a new revelation from God, the special feature of which was to harmonize and unify all conflicting creeds. It was not, he claimed, his intention to form a new sect.

> It is the harmony of all scriptures, and prophets and dispensations. It is not an isolated creed, but the science which binds and explains and harmonizes all religions. It gives to history a meaning, to the action

> of Providence a consistency, to quarrelling churches a commond bond and to successive dispensations a continuity...It is the wonderful solvent, which fuses all dispensations into a new chemical compound. It is the mighty absorbent, which absorbs all that is good and true and beautiful in the objective world.66

The Nava-Vidhan did not alter Sen's attitude to the scriptures even though his views on the necessity of authority in religious matters were dramatically reversed. He strongly, for example, refuted deism because of its disavowal of authority in religion.[67] In one of the most revealing pieces of writing belonging to this period, Keshub expounds what the New Dispensation understands by the concept of revelation.[68] His illustrations here, as in most of his speeches and writings, are drawn from the Christian tradition, but it is fair to assume that his views are applicable to the scriptures of other traditions as well. He draws a distinction between the New Dispensation and Deism, claiming that the former, unlike the latter, does not deny revelation, but reserves the right to interpret it in its own way. This interpretation is based on a contrast between the inspiration of words and the inspiration of events. The former is categorically denied.

> That a book has come down to us from heaven, cut and dry, containing lessons for our guidance and salvation, we do not believe. As a meteor falls from heavens, even so dropped a dazzling gospel-light! This story is too fantastic for our credence. Inspiration is not an ethereal rainbow delusion like that. It is real; it is solid. It is neither a written nor a printed book. Nor is it a voice behind the clouds speaking like thunder unto entire nations through their accredited prophet-leaders. We wholly disbelieve in the inspiration of words written or words spoken. Neither in the pen nor in the lips can there be inspiration.69

Events alone, according to Keshub, are inspired and revealed. In this sense, both the Old and New Testaments and the leading figures of its drama are inspired. By revelation, he means,

> the living history not the dead narrative; the fresh events as they occured, not the lifeless traditions recorded on paper. The letter killeth. Convert a saint into a beautiful picture on canvas, convert living apostles into antiquated doctrines, transform living events into lifeless ceremonies, and burning enthusiasm into the cold dogmatism of books and creeds, and you kill inspiration. What you read in the Bible was inspired. It would be incorrect to say that the Bible is inspired. Inspiration dwells in the fact-Bible not in the book-Bible, in the living Gospel, not in the letter of the book.70

The effect of this kind of view was to further reduce the significance of the scriptural text. The unique claim of any scripture was dissolved in the unbounded eclecticism of Keshub's thought. In fact, the scriptures of Nava-Vidhan included, "the whole of science, physical, meta-physical and moral and also the science of religion".[71] Keshub continued the trend noted earlier, especially with A.K. Datta in the time of Debendranath Tagore, of attempting to justify his religious experiments in the name of science. The special mission of the New-Dispensation to unite all creeds was proclaimed as scientific, for "science and salvation" were identical, and its enemies were not atheists but "unscientific men". Its truths, Keshub argued, were demonstrable for they were based upon observation and experiment and the movement was ready to expunge any tenet falsified by scientific discoveries.[72] Strange also, but perhaps not surprising, was his attempt to justify the Nava-Vidhan on the authority of Shankara. The latter was seen as fore-shadowing the Nava-Vidhan which Keshub described as a "New Shankaracharya, loftier and grander far than the Old Shankara".[73]

Of all the leaders so far considered, Keshub is significant

as being the most influential of his times. He is important in any consideration of Vivekananda's thought, for the latter had also imbibed the legacy of Brahmoism. Early in his career, Vivekananda was active in the circles of the Brahmo Samaj. He was a member of Keshub's Band of Hope, and acted on stage at the side of Keshub.[74] Along with Ramakrishna, Keshub was probably the strongest moulding force in shaping Vivekananda's thought.[75] It is perhaps by no means inexplicable that Vivekananda first approached Ramakrishna with a strong scepticism of texts and doctrines, searching for someone who had personal experience of reality and who could lead him to such direct experience himself. This was the only kind of proof, which as we have seen, Keshub thought imperative and accepted as valid.

6.5 Ramakrishna

At the time of Keshub's death in January 1884, the centre of religious attention in Calcutta had already shifted to Ramakrishna, who had taken up abode in the Kālī temple at Dakshineshwar. It was Keshub, in fact, who brought Ramakrishna to public attention. Since their first meeting in 1875, a close relationship had developed between both men, and it is often claimed that Ramakrishna exercised considerable influence on Keshub's thinking, many of the ideas of the New Dispensation being attributed to him. Primarily through Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission founded in 1897, Ramakrishna, like the Brahmo Samaj, has exercised a considerable

influence on the character of modern Hinduism. Our primary concern being his attitude to scriptural authority, only the briefest biographical details are necessary here.[76]

Ramakrishna was born in a poor Brahmin family of Kamarpukur, a village about seventy miles from Calcutta, on February 18th, 1836. He seemed endowed with an extremely sensitive temperament and frequently experienced trance-like states of unconsciousness, once when struck by the spectacular contrast between a flock of white swans flying against the background of a dark band of clouds, and again while enacting the role of Siva during a Śiva-rātri festival. Ramakrishna, then known by his childhood name of Gadadhar, was averse to formal education, and his eldest brother Ramkumar, who ran a Sanskrit school in Calcutta, took him to the city hoping to reform his attitudes. Ramkumar failed in this task, but Gadadhar became his assistant in performing the rituals of worship in several Calcutta homes where he served as family priest. When in 1855 Rani Rasmani, a wealthy Calcutta widow who built a temple dedicated to the Goddess Kālī, had difficulties in securing the services of a brahmin priest because of her low caste status, Ramkumar accepted the offer and Gadadhar, after an initial reluctance, also took up residence there. Here also, he became his brother's acolyte, and when the latter died suddenly in 1856, Gadadhar became the temple priest. He entered into the worship of Kālī with characteristic intensity and passion, yearning for a vision of the Goddess. The agony and culminating ecstasy of his experience is best described in his own words.

> There was then an intolerable anguish in my heart because I could not have Her vision. Just as a man wrings a towel forcibly to squeeze out all the water from it, I felt as if somebody caught hold of my heart and mind and was wringing them likewise. Greatly afflicted with the thought that I might never have Mother's vision, I was in great agony. I thought that there was no use in living such a life. My eyes suddenly fell upon the sword that was there in the Mother's temple. I made up my mind to put an end to my life with it that very moment. Like one mad, I ran and caught hold of it, when suddenly I had the wonderful vision of Mother and fell down unconscious. I did not know what happened then in the external world - how that day and the next slipped away. But, in my heart of hearts, there was flowing a current of intense bliss, never experienced before, and I had the immediate knowledge of the Light that is Mother.77

Ramakrishna's intense spiritual life aroused fears concerning his sanity and his mother implored him to return to his village, hoping that marriage might lead to a more settled and normal course of life. Accordingly, in May 1859, he was married to Saradamani, who eventually became known as the Holy Mother, and assumed an important role in the Mission's activities after his death. In 1860 Ramakrishna returned to Dakshineshwar temple, practising over the next few years various forms of sādhana. Under the guidance of Bhairavi Brahmani, a female ascetic, he went through the disciplines of Tantra. Incidentally, it was Bhairavi who proclaimed him an avatāra and made efforts to have him accepted as such. Ramakrishna was also initiated into the study and practice of Advaita Vedānta by a wandering monk, Tota Puri, a phase claimed to be the climax of his sādhana. He is also said to have been exposed to the Christian and Islamic paths.[78] Ramakrishna soon settled into the role of spiritual mentor to a large body of disciples who gathered around him, venturing only occasionally from his abode in the Dakshineshwar temple. He died of throat cancer

on August 16th, 1886.

Ramakrishna's instructions as a spiritual teacher covers a wide variety of subjects, and we have selected for analysis only those which are relevant to our understanding of his attitude to the scriptures.[79] His antipathy to formal education has already been noted. He felt that it was useful only for prosperity in the world and this was an often repeated theme of his talks. Two of his favourite parables centred on this idea. Learned men were compared by him to kites and vultures which soared to great heights in the sky but whose eyes were forever focused on the decaying carcasses below. They were also likened to foolish men in a mango orchard who counted the leaves and fruits and argued to estimate their value, instead of plucking and relishing the juicy fruits. Along with this strong censure of the pedantic mind, he attributed little importance to reason and intellect in the religious life.[80] He often, however, qualified this denunciation by praising knowledge which led to mental purification.

In terms of the actual role of the scriptures, he drew the parallel with a geographical map. Sacred books, he contended, only point the way to God.[81] The maximum that one can derive from a study of the scriptures is a feeling that God exists.[82] At times he was even more pessimistic about what could be accomplished by textual studies. The scriptures are diluted, containing as he puts it, a "mixture of sand and sugar", difficult to distinguish and separate. Their essence is much better learnt from a spiritual teacher.[83] They were of no use in conveying the feeling of God.

> This feeling is something very different from book-learning. Books, scriptures and science appear as mere dirt and straw after the realization of God.84

There is also the implication in Ramakrishna that the Vedas are by no means unique, for there are many other such texts.[85] Direct vision of God was the central idea of his entire instruction. It was the only form of verification.

> But seeing is far better than hearing. Then all doubts disappear. It is true that many things are recorded in the scriptures; but all these are useless without the direct realization of God, without devotion to His Lotus Feet, without purity of heart. The almanac forecasts the rainfall of the year. But not a drop of water will you get by squeezing the almanac. No, not even one drop.86

The awakening of the kuṇḍalinī in the state of sāmadhi, alone led to jñāna (knowledge), and the realization of brahman.[87]

It is interesting to look at the references to Shankara in the conversations of Ramakrishna. One expects to find significant mention of Shankara, in the light of his tuition under Tota Puri, a member of one of the ten monastic orders founded by Shankara.[88] There are however, only six references to Shankara in Gupta's recordings. Five of these relate, with minor variations, an unflattering incident in Shankara's life. One day, after emerging from a bath in the Ganges, Shankara was accidentally brushed by an untouchable. Shankara reproached the man, who then suprisingly questioned him on the nature of his identification with the body. The pure Self, argued the untouchable, neither touches nor is touched. In the sixth reference, Ramakrishna uses Shankara to illustrate the example of a jnānī who retains his sense of ego for the purposes of instructing others.

The very few references to Shankara in Ramakrishna's conversations raises the important question concerning the sources of Ramakrishna's ideas. It is a matter well worth examination in view of Ramakrishna's cardinal place in the modern revival of Hinduism. Unfortunately, critical studies of Ramakrishna's thought are few and the work of W.G. Neevel Jr. is perhaps the only attempt to explore this question.[89] Neevel does not specifically investigate Ramakrishna's attitude to the Vedas, but raises questions and suggests answers which shed light on this problem. He goes into great details of examination of textual sources, but the principal lines of his argument are well worth outlining here. Neevel reiterates the point already noted about Ramakrishna's disregard for philosophical and theological deliberations and his devaluation of the role of reason. He contrasts this with the systematic presentation of his ideas by Vivekananda as a reinterpretation of Shankara. Neevel suggests that this methodic arrangement was a response to the foreign audience which Vivekananda sought to reach.

> Swami Vivekananda and the succeeding Rāmakrishna missionaries were concerned to present the Hindu tradition and Śrī Rāmakrishna's message in a manner most comprehensible and appealing to Americans and Europeans. The Upaniṣads and the Vedānta school of religious thought (darśana) based upon them had already found ready acceptance and praise, especially within certain non-traditional and non-Christian circles. Moreover, the currency of transcendental idealism and vitalistic monism within Western philosophy provided a ready basis for an acceptance of the profundity of Shaṅkarācārya's idealistic non-dualism (advaita). Since Śri Rāmakrishna held such a widely inclusive Hindu position, it was not at all difficult to emphasize or highlight the more appealing and acceptable Vedāntic and advaitic aspects of his teachings.90

By contrasting the standard biographies of Ramakrishna with earlier historical evidence, Neevel calls into question the

systematic arrangement of Ramakrishna's sādhana. This is usually presented in an orderly sequence from certain preliminary forms of discipline to the pivot of his non-dual experience. Neevel's view is that this is a reconstruction,

> derived more from the views of Swami Vivekānanda and the later Rāmakrishna Mission than from the teachings of Śrī Rāmakrishna himself. I propose that Saradānanda and other official biographers were moved to establish this particular order by their conviction that Advaita Vedānta is the ultimate expression of religious truth and therefore the ultimate and finally satisfying phase of Rāmakrishna's sādhana.91

Neevel's thesis is that the primary influence on Ramakrishna's thought, forming the basic framework through which all his later experiences were interpreted, was his Tantra sādhana, and that his views are more adequately understood in the concepts of Tantra than in Shankara's Advaita. He proceeds to emphasize several significant differences in method and content between Shankara and Ramakrishna, illustrating the derivation of the latter from Tantra sources.[92] To the many points of difference argued by Neevel, we would also add the important area of attitudes to the authority and role of the Vedas. Ramakrishna, as we have seen, did not reject outright the authority of the scriptures as much as redefine it, and this accords with Tantra perceptions of the texts.[93] The sources of Ramakrishna's attitude to the scriptures provide, of course, another important clue to the comprehension of Vivekananda's position.

6.6 The Influence of the Unitarians

Throughout this period, Unitarian influences were most significant in prompting the questioning of scriptural authority and also in the formulation of the new attitudes which eventually emerged. The Unitarian association with the Brahmo Samaj existed from its early beginnings in the time of Rammohun Roy, continued through all the vissicitudes, and was strong in the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj at the close of the nineteenth century. Incidentally, Roy died at the Bristol estate of Reverend Lant Carpenter, the well known English Unitarian. He also corresponded with famous American Unitarians like William Ellery Channing and Joseph Tuckerman, and had planned to visit America in the hope of meeting Channing.[94] He often referred to himself as a Hindu Unitarian.[95] In the time of Keshub Chandra Sen, the American missionary C.H.A. Dall was active in the circles of the Samaj, even though both men later parted ways as Keshub became less interested in soical reform.[96] As late as 1896, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was visited by R.J.T. Sunderland, a representative of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. The Brahmo Samaj Committee was organized by Sunderland for the annual selection of a suitable candidate interested in the propagation of Brahmoism, for theological training at the Manchester New College of Oxford. Funds for the scholarship were provided by an English Unitarian gentleman, and many were trained under the scheme.[97] There were further visits by representatives of the same organization in 1897 and 1899.

The attraction of Unitarianism for Rammohun Roy was perhaps the critique of Trinitarian Christianity it provided, which he used in his disputation with the missionaries. The entire critique was adopted by the Brahmo Samaj. Following the Unitarians, the Samaj objected to the doctrine of the Trinity arguing that it subverted the unity of God. They felt that Christ ought to be regarded as distinct from and inferior to God and discussed the problems of representing him as both human and divine. He was an emissary of God to effect a spiritual regeneration of mankind, and his agony and suffering were real. Unitarians rejected the idea that Christ's death made God more placable and merciful. They also opposed the doctrines on the natural depravity of man and the predestination of a select few for salvation.[98]

The Unitarian thinkers who exercised the greatest influence on the formation of Brahmo theology were Channing and Theodore Parker. The works of both men were widely circulated among Brahmos and the latter's writings were translated into Bengali. The strength and extent of the influence become very clear when the writings of both men are compared particularly with those of the prolific Keshub Chandra Sen. Channing, for example, does not appear to question the existence of a valid scriptural revelation, but argues for a wider concept of revelation.

> But we shall err greatly, if we imagine that his Gospel is the only light, that every ray comes to us from a single Book, that no splendours issue from God's Works and Providence, that we have no teacher in religion but the few pages bound up in our Bibles. Jesus Christ came,

> not only to give us his peculiar teaching, but to introduce us to the imperishable lessons which God for ever furnishes in our own and all Human Experience, and in the laws and movements of the Universe.99

He does not appear to question the significance and status of the Bible as revelation, but argues for the thorough exercise of reason in its interpretation, for it is a book, "written for men, in the language of men, and its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books".[100]

His concern is with enunciating the principles of its right interpretation. Rammohun Roy appears more akin to Channing in his attitude to the scriptures, whereas Keshub seems to have imbibed his views mainly from Parker, who radically rejected any idea of scriptural infallibility and argued for the human origin and character of all scriptures.

> Laying aside all prejudices, if we look into the Bible in a general way, as into any other books, we find facts which force the conclusion upon us, that the Bible is a human work, as much as the Principia of Newton or Descartes, or the Vedas and Koran. Some things are beautiful and true, but others no man, in his reason, can accept. Here are the works of various writers, from the eleventh century before, to the second century after Christ, thrown capriciously together, and united by no common tie but the lids of the bookbinder.101

The alternative forms of revelation suggested by Keshub are culled from the writings of Channing and Parker. Keshub's views on internal and external nature as revelation were earlier affirmed by Channing and his ideas on inspiration are a close restatement of Parker's own. The "Infinite", according to Channing, is revealed in all things, and until we have learnt to see the infinite in nature, we have missed a lesson that is continuously taught to us. He describes the universe as a symbol of "Infinite Power,

Intelligence, Purity, Bliss and Love".

> Nature everywhere testifies to the Infinity of its Author. It bears throughout the impress of the Infinite. It proclaims a Perfection illimitable, unsearchable, transcending all thought and utterance. It is modelled and moulded, as a whole and in its least molecule, with grandeur, unfathomable intelligence, and inexhaustible bounty. This is the glory of the universe. And to behold this is to understand the universe.102

Channing understood internal human nature to be a revelation in the sense that man's primary emotions urge a relationship with a perfect being. In human nature is wrapped up the idea of God, and His image is carried in man's moral and intellectual powers.

> Thus we see that human nature is impelled by affections of gratitude, esteem, veneration, joy, not to mention various others, which prepare us to be touched and penetrated by the infinite goodness of God, and which when directed to Him, constitute piety. That these emotions are designed to be devoted particularly to the Creator, we learn from the fact that they are boundless in their range and demand an Unbounded Object. They cannot satisfy themselves with the degrees of love, intelligence, and power which are found in human beings... They delight in the infinite, and never can find repose but in an Infinite Being, who combines all good.103

Parker argues here that inspiration is superior to the revelation of God in nature, and is a regular mode of God's operation on the human spirit. It is universal, varying in degree not in kind, and its revelation is modified by the peculiar circumstances of the individual who receives it.

> It is the direct and intuitive perception of some truth, either of thought or of sentiment. There can be but one mode of Inspiration: it is the action of the Highest within the soul, the divine presence imparting light.104

Inspiration, according to Parker, is the only means by which we gain knowledge of what is not seen and felt, and it is not confined to any single religious tradition, nation or age. The variation in the degree of inspiration, however, is dependent on the natural intellectual, moral and religious

endowment of the individual, as well as upon the use each individual makes of this inheritance. It results from the faithful use of our faculties; the purer the moral character, the loftier and more complete is the inspiration. Inspiration, says Parker, can assume a variety of forms, modified by the country, character and education of the one who receives it. It can motivate action as well as words. Parker laments the fact that in modern times men have ceased to believe in the possibility of inspiration. It is accepted as an experience of the past and guidance is sought instead in tradition, "the poor and flickering light which we get of the priest".

The study of Parker's writings throws great light on many of Keshub's arguments, and particularly on what he means by the intuitive knowledge of God.[105] It is Parker's contention that the institution of religion is founded in the very constitution of man's being. The principle in man which gives rise to religion is his inborn sense of dependence. He argues further that this religious element presupposes the existence of its object of satisfaction.

> A natural want in Man's constitution implies satisfaction in some quarter, just as the faculty of seeing implies something to correspond to this faculty, namely, objects to be seen, and a medium of light to see by. As the tendency to love implies something lovely for its object, so the religious consciousness implies its object. If it is regarded as a sense of absolute dependence, it implies the absolute on which this dependence rests, independent of ourselves.106

The knowledge of God then, in Parker's view, is a "spontaneous intuition of reason". He argues, as Keshub later does, that belief does not depend on any a posteriori or a priori argument, but preceded proof and is gained through this,

"natural revelation". It is the result of the interaction of the intellectual and religious faculties of man. The identical argument has been suggested by Keshub.[107] After alluding to the sense of dependence, Keshub concludes,

> When a man feels this dependence then he has proclaimed himself a theist. Atheism is impossible. The very consciousness of self repudiates atheism.108

It is obvious then, that the rejection of Vedic infallibility created a gap which the alternative forms or revelation suggested by Unitarianism quickly filled.

Throughout the period under survey, Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), founder of the Arya Samaj, was the solitary champion of Vedic authority and infallibility. Born at Kathiawar in the state of Gujarat, Dayananda left home at an early age after a dispute with his father over the worship of idols and wandered across India for many years before finally becoming the disciple of Virajananda, a blind samnyāsin of Mathura.[109] He founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 at Bombay. Belief in the infallibility of the Vedas was the cornerstone of all the doctrines of the movement. The four Vedas were held by him to be the eternal utterances of God, containing all religious truth. This was his major difference with the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, a view which they were unsuccessful in getting him to reject.[110] All Post-Vedic developments in Hinduism, contradicted in the Vedas or not expressly approved by them, were denounced by Dayananda. This view was also extended to other texts of the Hindu tradition, and the Purāṇas, for example, were repudiated by him as being false. Dayananda, however did not accord equal authoritativeness to all portions of the Vedas. He accorded

primacy to the samhitās (hymns) alone. He was positively anti-brahminical, attacked the doctrine of caste and like the Brahmo Samaj, dismissed the idea of the avatāra.

The Arya-Samaj, however, had a limited impact. At the time of Dayananda's death in 1883, the total membership was around twenty-thousand, and the movement never really had an appeal outside of the Punjab.[111] Panikkar suggests several reasons for this.[112] Dayananda's call for a return back to the Vedas involved a denial of all the developments of medieval Hinduism which were bitterly opposed by him. The Vedic religion was no longer related to the religious experiences of the masses and Panikkar feels that Dayananda's intolerant attitude towards other religions, especially Islam and Christiantiy, even though explicable in the context of his times, was inconsistent with Hindu traditions.

We have traversed a period of over one hundred years in our survey of attitudes to scriptural authority from Rammohun Roy to Ramakrishna. We have argued that in order to be consistent, Rammohun's position compelled him to adopt a considerably modified view of Vedic authority, even though he did not unambiguously reject the doctrine of Vedic infallibility. We sought to demonstrate how many of the ideas which influenced his view of the scriptures were made more explicit and their implications drawn out in greater detail by subsequent leaders of the movement. Of all the thinkers we have studied, however, Rammohun Roy strove most assiduously to justify his views by resort to scriptural authority through interpretation and commentary. With the

formal rejection of the authoritativeness of the Vedas in the time of Debendranath Tagore, appeals to Vedic authority were no longer indispensable, for then intuition emerged as the alternative source of religious knowledge. The hermeneutical approach was almost totally disregraded, a legacy most manifest in the history of modern Hinduism in its lack of development in this method. This turning point came about in Tagore's time when, in controversy with Christian missionaries, the doctrine of infallibility became a positive embarassment and dissidents under A.K. Datta clamoured for its expurgation. We have seen how Keshub Chandra Sen welcomed the decision as the most important stride in the doctrinal growth of the Samaj. This direction of development continued under Keshub, and the triumph of individual intuitive experience over all forms of religious authority, may be said to have attained its climax in his time. With Keshub, the Brahmo Samaj completed a full paradoxical circle. Founded in the name of rationalism, it ended with a denial of the role of reason and the intellect in the religious quest, upholding personal experience as unquestionable and sacrosant. We have noted also the anti-dogma argument of Keshub. This most probably had its origin in Rammohun's time when, under the barrage of missionary criticism, he attempted to prune the unwieldy mass of Hindu beliefs, seeking to introduce a definiteness of shape and a facility of comprehension, rivalling what he saw as positive features of Christianity. With the rejection of Vedic infallibility and the introduction of the authority of intuitive experience, the anti-doctrinal argument took on new meanings. Doctrines became antithetical to direct

intuitive realization and the importance of the latter was argued in contradistinction to the former.

Ramakrishna's background was different from that of the Brahmo Samaj leaders in that he was virtually unexposed to Westernizing influences. He was rooted, as we have seen, in the traditions of Hinduism, but in the strands which emphasized the authority of mystical experience. His claim to have had direct personal experience of the truths of religion was undoubtedly the most important factor in explaining Keshub's attraction to him. In one of those strange and consequential coincidences of history, two different, but very important and influential figures of modern Hinduism, concurred on the supremacy of personal spiritual experience and relative scorn of scripture.[113]

CHAPTER 7

VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT OF THE NATURE, ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE VEDAS

In Chapter 6, our aim was to trace the development of attitudes towards scriptural authority and revelation during the period from Rammohun Roy to Ramakrishna. We discovered, in this interval, an increasing rejection of conventional interpretations of the authority of the scriptures. We saw Debendranath Tagore formally renouncing the authoritative supremacy of the Vedas, and Keshub Chandra Sen seeking to establish the sacrosanctity of individual intuitive experience over all forms of religious authority. Ramakrishna was derogatory and cynical about the value of scriptural study, and negative in his views about their overall importance. He maintained the primacy of direct personal experience. Vivekananda, of course, as a direct disciple of Ramakrishna was the heir of this legacy. Many of the attitudes of the time were given renewed emphasis by him, and some of its mere suggestions and outlines were elaborately detailed and expanded.

In the present chapter, we seek to examine the direction and development given to this legacy by Vivekananda, and to highlight any contrasts with the conclusions we have drawn

out from our study of Shankara. In general, our concern is to unfold his understanding of the origin of the Vedas, the nature and scope of their authority, his principles of interpretation, and significant differences of emphasis between the views he expressed abroad and those in his homeland.

7.1 The Genesis of the Vedas and the Personal Foundations of their Authority

Perhaps the clearest statements in all of the writings and lectures of Vivekananda on the origin of the Vedas and the personal basis of their authority occur in his commentary on the Yoga-sūtras of Patañjali.[1] Vivekananda comments on the sūtra, "Pratyakshānumānāgamāḥ pramāṇāni", which enumerates the valid sources of knowledge acceptable to the Yoga school of Indian philosophy. Vivekananda renders "pramāṇāni" as "proofs" and translates the sūtra, "Direct perception, inference, and competent evidence are proofs". Pratyaksha, for him, is knowledge directly derived from the senses, and this is valid as long as the sense instruments are accurate and free from error. Anumāna is the inference of a signified object through an appropriate sign. Very significantly, the term, "āgama", which he first translated as "competent evidence", is now given as "Āptavākya".[2] The latter, he defines as, "the direct evidence of the Yogīs, of those who have seen the truth".[3] The difference between such a person and the ordinary individual in the matter of

acquiring knowledge is the freedom of the former from the effort of intellectualizing.

> Before his mind, the past, the present, and the future are alike, one book for him to read; he does not require to go through the tedious processes for knowledge we have to; his words are proof, because he sees knowledge in himself.4

Vivekananda distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge or truths. Science, according to him, is knowledge derived from the application of reason to data acquired through the senses. The Vedas, on the other hand, is knowledge acquired by the "subtle, supersensuous power of Yoga".[5] He considers the latter to be valid because it is derived from direct perception.

In his commentary on this sūtra, Vivekananda shows a certain awareness of the immediate problem of determining whether a particular āptavākya is valid knowledge. He proposes therefore, a set of criteria for evaluating the authenticity of the āpta and his perceptions. Firstly, Vivekananda emphasizes the character of the āpta. Unlike other fields of endeavour, where the discovery of truth is independent of and not conditional on the moral character of the inquirer, here the reverse is true. "No impure man will ever have the power to reach the truths of religion".[6] We must first ascertain therefore, that the āpta is perfectly unselfish and holy. In imparting knowledge, Vivekananda advances, we must be clear that the āpta has no motive for material gain or acclaim. Secondly, we must be certain that he has reached beyond the senses. The content of his knowledge should be information unobtainable through the application of our senses.[7] Thirdly, his perceptions should

not contradict truths derived from other valid sources of knowledge. It should, for example, be immediately rejected if it contradicts scientific knowledge.

> Because whatever I see is proof, and whatever you see is proof, if it does not contradict any past knowledge. There is knowledge beyond the senses, and whenever it does not contradict reason and past human experience, that knowledge is proof.8

Finally, according to Vivekananda, the assertions of the āpta must have a possibility of verification. The āpta should never claim any singular or unique faculty of perception. He must only represent in himself the possibilities of all persons and his perceptions must be directly accessible to everyone.

It is these āptas, adds Vivekananda, who are the authors of the sacred scriptures and the latter are proof only because of this fact. The authority of the scripture is therefore, one derived from the personal authority of the āpta.

> Who is a true witness? He is a true witness to whom the thing said is a direct perception. Therefore the Vedas are true, because they consist of the evidence of competent persons.9

Vivekananda uses the word, rishi, synonymously with āpta and often describes the Vedas as the documentation of their perceptions.

> The Vedas are said to be written by the Rishis. The Rishis were sages who realised certain facts. The exact definition of the Sanskrit word Rishi is a Seer of Mantras - of the thoughts conveyed in the Vedic hymns. These men declared that they had realised - sensed, if that word can be used with regard to the superconscious - certain facts, and these they proceeded to put on record.10

This, of course, accords with his view of revelation as, "later reports of spiritual discoveries".[11] It is important to note, however, that Vivekananda does not see the rishis

as creators of the truths advocated by them. Like scientists in relation to the natural world, they are only discoverers. He characterizes the Vedas as a collection of spiritual laws discovered at different times by different persons.

> Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before discovery, and would remain even if we forgot them.12

We may briefly note here that these spiritual laws are not conceived to be existing anywhere outside, but are described by him as, "the eternal laws living in every soul".[13] It is to substantiate this claim that he describes the Vedas as being "expired" rather than "inspired".

7.2 The Provisional and Limited Character of the Authority of the Vedas

The nature of the authoritative claim of the Vedas, as perceived by Vivekananda, is best illustrated by beginning with two analogies which he repeatedly employs. The adequacy of the scriptures is compared to the value and utility of a map to a traveller, before he visits a country he longs to see.[14] The map, according to Vivekananda, can only create curiosity for first-hand knowledge of the place, and can communicate a vague conception of its reality. Maps are in no way equivalent to the direct knowledge of the country, gathered by actually being there. The second analogy to

which Vivekananda resorts is the almanac or calendar comparison.[15] The difference between the knowledge derived from a study of the scriptures and true spiritual knowledge is compared by him to predictions of rainfall in an almanac and actual rainfall. The rain is not to be found in the calendar. The significant point of both analogies is the same. The knowledge which we may gain from the scripture is not a self-sufficient one. Something over and beyond this is required. Like maps, scriptures can only arouse our curiosities and stimulate us to make the discoveries for ourselves.

The Vedānta, in the view of Vivekananda, does not accept the authority of any text, denies the validity of any one text over another, and refuses to concede that any one text can exhaust all truths about ultimate reality.[16] It is clear that, for him, the Vedas do not possess any intrinsic validity. Consistent with his views on their origin and the personal foundations of their authority, he envisages them as simply recording the spiritual discoveries of others, and the methods by which such discoveries have been made. These findings, however, must be personally rediscovered by every individual before they are valid for him or her.

> There are certain religious facts which, as in external science, have to be perceived, and upon them religion Will be built. Of course, the extreme claim that you must believe every dogma of a religion is degrading to the human mind. The man who asks you to believe everything, degrades himself, and, if you believe, degrades you too. The sages of the world have only the right to tell us that they have analysed their minds and have found these facts, and if we do the same we shall also believe, and not before. That is all there is in religion.17

The text therefore, is only an indication of the way to

the discovery of certain facts.[18] The proof of truth is the direct knowledge of the individual, and not the fact of its embodiment in any text. The individual verifies and must verify the text.[19] This verification is likened to ordinary direct perception, and constitutes the ultimately valid knowledge.

> The proof, therefore, of the Vedas is just the same as the proof of this table before me, Pratyaksha, direct perception. This I see with the senses, and the truths of spirituality we also see in a superconscious state of the human soul.20
>
> Books are not an end-all. Verification is the only proof of religious truth. Each must verify for himself; and no teacher who says, "I have seen but you cannot", is to be trusted, only that one who says, "You can see too". All scriptures, all truths are Vedas in all times, in all countries; because these truths are to be <u>seen</u>, and any one may discover them.21

For Vivekananda, the fact of one individual gaining knowledge

is proof of the ability and necessity of every other individual to do the same.[22] A scriptural text is represented by him as a second-hand religion. As a record of the experiences of others, it may stimulate our own desires, but even as one person's eating is of little value to another, so also is the record of another person's experiences until we attain to the same end.[23]

The imperative therefore, for Vivekananda, is that every one should become a <u>rishi</u>. Until that time, the religious life remains empty and has not even commenced. The chief characteristic of the <u>rishi</u> status is the possibility of a direct apprehension of religious truth.

> He is a man who sees religion, to whom religion is not merely book-learning, not argumentation, nor speculation, nor much talking, but actual realisation, a coming face to face with truths that transcend the senses.24

This possibility and requirement of every individual to become a rishi is one of the important points of contrast which Vivekananda emphasized between Hinduism and other religious traditions. In the latter, he claims, insight is limited to a few select individuals, through whom truth is made available to the many.

> Truth came to Jesus of Nazareth, and we must all obey him. But the truth came to the Rishis of India - the Mantra-drashtas, the seers of thought - and will come to all Rishis in the future, not to talkers, not to book-swallowers, not to scholars, not to philologists, but to seers of thought.25

Vivekananda did not only advocate the necessity of each one becoming a rishi and verifying for himself the experiences of others recorded in the Vedas, he often asserted that it is only in becoming a rishi that the scriptures are properly understood.[26] His justification for this view seems to be that as products and records of direct perception, they were not written for the intellect or for understanding through a process of rational inquiry and analysis. The texts become meaningful only when one has lifted oneself to the same heights of perception. At that point, however, they are only useful to the extent that they confirm what one has known directly.[27] One peculiarity of the Vedas, Vivekananda says, in contrast to the scriptures of other religious traditions is that they are the only ones asserting the need for going beyond them. They are only written, according to him, for the adult who is in the childhood state of religious growth. One has therefore, to outgrow the necessity for them. He likens the texts to tubs or hedges around a tiny plant, the confines of which it must eventually transcend.[28]

7.3 The Distinction between Scriptural Revelation and Realization

It is possible to make a clear and significant distinction, in Vivekananda, between the knowledge that is gathered from inquiry into a scriptural revelation and what he understands as realization.[29] The former is not perceived as a self-sufficient end, capable of taking one directly to realization. This is, of course, consistent with his call for verification of scriptural declarations.

> We can read all the Vedas, and yet will not realise anything, but when we practise their teachings, then we attain to that state which realises what the scriptures say, which penetrates where neither reason nor perception nor inference can go, and where the testimony of others cannot avail.30

The real study, according to Vivekananda, is that by which the unchangeable is realised, and he distinguishes this from reading, reasoning and believing. He identifies it with superconscious perception.[31] In fact, distinguishing Vedānta from scriptural texts, Vivekananda says that the former is necessary because neither books nor reasoning can lead us to God. He identifies Vedānta here as a method for attaining superconscious perception.[32] He accepts the legitimacy of one of his disciples' complaint that he had read of everything in the scriptures, but had not realized anything.[33] He saw the ultimate end of the religious quest, the realization of God within oneself, as being beyond all books.

> Talking, arguing, and reading books, the highest flights of the intellect, the Vedas themselves, all these cannot give knowledge of the Self.34

Vivekananda sometimes adopted an extreme position of asserting

that no scriptural text can make us religious, and that the latter can be attained only by dispensing with such texts.[35]

The process of inquiring into scriptural texts is identified by him with activity at the intellectual level, and is seen only as benefiting that level of our personalities. He points out, however, that there is no equation between a high order of intellectual development and spiritual growth. Scriptural analysis can easily delude us that we are growing spiritually. He describes it as intellectual opium-eating.[36] Scriptures are specified by him as theoretical religion which is ultimately unsatisfactory.[37]

> Knowledge of the Absolute depends upon no book, nor upon anything; it is absolute in itself. No amount of study will give this knowledge; it is not theory, it is realisation.38

Vivekananda distinguishes between the essentials and non-essentials of every religion, between what he terms as the essential truth and the non-essential receptacle in which this truth is held. Scriptures and belief in their validity are classified by him along with the non-essentials of religion.[39] Among other non-essentials, he lists doctrines, dogmas, rituals, temples, images and forms. He describes these as only preparations for removing internal impurities.[40]

With his clear definition of scriptures as theoretical religion, and his association of inquiry into them with limited intellectual activity and achievement, it is not surprising to find Vivekananda distinguishing the aims of <u>śravana</u>, <u>manana</u> and <u>nididhyāsana</u>. These distinctions are,

of course, closely related to the view that the claims of any scripture are to be verified, and that the knowledge one can derive from investigating the words and sentences of the same is not definitive. We must remark, however, that there is little discussion, elaboration or definition of these processes in his lectures and writings. He rarely refers to the original Sanskrit terms. There is still enough evidence, however, to show that he differentiates their natures and aims.

In one of his revealing analogies about the usefulness of scriptures, he refers to the relation between surgical texts and the making of a surgeon.[41] His purport is that textual knowledge is not adequate, but must, in some way or other, be further applied to produce the desirable end. This seems to be the leading idea in his distinction of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana. From the brief references that are available to us, śravaṇa is identified by him with hearing or listening. This hearing is from the teacher, and its essential content is the reality of the ātman and the māyā nature of everything else.[42] Manana seems generally to be the process of understanding. It is thinking or reasoning from different standpoints on what has been heard. Its purpose is to establish knowledge in oneself by reason, so that belief is not founded on ignorance. This is only preliminary.

> You may reason it out and understand it intellectually, but there is a long way between intellectual understanding and the practical realisation of it. Between the plan of the building and the building itself there is quite a long distance.43

The processes of hearing and reasoning are followed by nididhyāsana, described by Vivekananda as meditation. It is the stage when all arguments are put behind, and one is concerned with developing the truth within oneself. He continuously affirms that the aim of meditation is realization, ensuring that knowledge is not merely intellectual assent or theory. While many may grasp the truth intellectually, only very few will attain realization. In his few and brief discussions of the threefold processes, the nature of this meditation is not outlined. At one point, he describes it as the constant assertion of the truth of one's identity with brahman.[44]

> It must be heard, apprehended intellectually, and lastly realised. Cogitating is applying reason and establishing this knowledge in ourselves by reason. Realising is making it a part of our lives by constant thinking of it...realization will come as a result of this continuous cogitation.45

One of the important results of Vivekananda's characterization of scriptural texts as the records of other people's experiences, as mere theoretical religion incapable of giving rise to liberating knowledge, was a strong denunciation of the value of learning and scholarship in the quest for satisfactory spiritual knowledge. He affirmed that learning was not necessary for salvation, and that its only value lay in the strengthening and disciplining of the mind.[46]

> We attend lectures and read books, argue and reason about God and soul, religion and salvation. These are not spirituality, because spirituality does not exist in books or in theories or in philosophies. It is not in learning or in reasoning, but in actual inner growth. Even parrots can learn things by heart and repeat them. If you become learned what of it? Asses can carry whole libraries. So when real light will come, there will be no more of this learning from books - no book-learning. The man who cannot write even his

> own name can be perfectly religious, and the man with all the libraries of the world in his head may fail to be. Learning is not a condition of spiritual growth; scholarship is not a condition.47

The great teachers of the world, according to Vivekananda, were not the ones who went into detailed analysis and explanations of texts. The ideal spiritual teacher, in his view, is not one who commands a mastery of the texts, but one who knows their spirit.[48] His own teacher, Ramakrishna, was presented by him as an example of one who spurned intellectual scholarship, and who apprehended religious truths directly. Perhaps the strength of Vivekananda's views on this matter is best demonstrated by the fact that he understood the central purpose of Ramakrishna's life as an illustration of this principle.

> In order to show how Vedic truths - eternally existent as the instrument with the Creator in His work of creation, preservation, and dissolution - reveal themselves spontaneously in the minds of the Rishis purified from all impressions of worldly attachment, and because such verification and confirmation of the scriptural truths will help the revival, reinstatement, and spread of religion - the Lord, though the very embodiment of the Vedas, in this new incarnation has discarded all external forms of learning.49

The obvious conclusion of our study, at this point, is that the value and functions of scriptural texts, as far as Vivekananda was concerned, were minimal in the search for genuine religious understanding. Vivekananda never seemed to miss an opportunity for deprecating their importance, and calling into question their usefulness. Almost everyone of his addresses contains such denunciations. These were directed both to scriptures in general and the Vedas.

He confesses a general scepticism of the accuracy of scriptural testimony.[50] He sees the view that all of God's

knowledge could be confined to any particular text as being horribly blasphemous.[51] Scriptural infallibility was understood by him to be a denial of the freedom to question and inquire, and book-worship as the worst form of idolatry.[52] He reviled the view that even incarnations must conform to the text.

> There are sects in my country who believe that God incarnates and becomes man, but even God incarnate as man must conform to the Vedas, and if His teachings do not so conform, they will not take Him. Buddha is worshipped by the Hindus, but if you say to them, "If you worship Buddha, why don't you take His teachings"? they will say, because they, the Buddhists, deny the Vedas. Such is the meaning of book-worship. Any number of lies in the name of a religious book are all right. In India if I want to teach anything new, and simply state it on my own authority, as what I think, nobody will come to listen to me; but if I take some passage from the Vedas, and juggle with it, and give it the most impossible meaning, murder everything that is reasonable in it, and bring out my own ideas as the ideas that were meant by the Vedas, all the fools would follow me in a crowd.53

Vivekananda criticizes and rejects the view that the Vedas are the only authentic revelation of God, or that they alone contain all the truths of religion.[54] He seems to see religious revelation as an eternal process.

> The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded.55

Revelation is also continuing in the sense that any individual who is suitably prepared may discover the fundamental truths.[56]

He alleged that parts of the Vedas are apparently contradictory, that they contain many crude ideas, and that the Upanishads offered varying advice on the methods of gaining knowledge of the ātman.[57] He felt that only those parts of the Vedas in harmony with reason should be accepted as being authoritative.[58] In this connection, he expressed the view that many of the rituals and sacrifices of the Vedas are held in reverence

only because of their antiquity and because their perpetuation became the business of the priestly class.[59] Vivekananda ridiculed the Mīmānsā view that the existence of anything is dependent on its mention in the Vedas.

> The Hindus believe that creation has come out of the Vedas. How do you know that there is a cow? Because the word cow is in the Vedas. How do you know there is a man outside? Because the word man is there. If it had not been, there would have been no man outside. That is what they say. Authority with a vengeance![60]

7.4 The Connection between Sādhana-catushtaya (the Fourfold Means) and the Acquisition of Liberating Knowledge

An important area of study, which accentuates the contrast between Vivekananda and Shankara in their respective presentations of the significance of the Vedas, emerges from Vivekananda's treatment of sādhana-catushtaya.[61] In Chapter 5.3, we have already discussed the scope of these means in Shankara's system. We have shown there that he regards these as the indispensable qualities of intellect, volition and emotion for inquiry into and assimilation of knowledge from the Upanishads. The cultivation of these qualities is only a preparation for śabda-pramāṇa study and not an alternative to it. They do not replace the pramāṇa, but ensure the fruitfulness of its operation. Knowledge is never gained other than by a valid and appropriate means. We now turn our attention to Vivekananda's handling of these prerequisites.

Viveka, he defines as the discrimination of the true or real from that which is untrue or unreal, the eternal from the transitory. It is the recognition of the reality of God and changefulness and illusory character of everything else.[62] Vairāgya is a renunciation of the desire for gain in this life or in the life to come. Vivekananda emphasizes the abnegation of the desire for heaven. The gain of heaven is not the attainment of truth or freedom from original false notions about oneself.

> What is heaven? Only the continuation of this earth. We would be better and the little foolish dreams we are dreaming would break sooner if there were no heaven, no continuation of this silly life on earth. By going to heaven we only prolong the miserable illusions.63

He defines śama and dama as, "the keeping of the organs in their own centres without allowing them to stray out".[64] In this connection, he distinguishes between the "organs" and "instruments". The "organs" are the nerve centres in the brain and are the true instruments of perception, while the "instruments" are the external perceptible sense vehicles. Any act of external perception, according to Vivekananda, requires the conjunction of the mind, the organs and instruments. The mind and the organs can be internally active even when there is no external perception. By śama and dama therefore, he means the checking of the internal and external activities of the mind, the restraint of the organs in their centres, and the control of the external instruments. Uparati, he defines as "not thinking of things of the senses". This includes not recalling pleasurable experiences of the past, and not anticipating future ones.[65]

Titiksha is forbearance. In amplifying this quality, Vivekananda focuses on the internal dimensions of restraint. Titiksha is not merely desisting from an external response, but not reacting with feelings of anger or hatred. It is the ability, he says, to tolerate the inevitable miseries of life, and sees Christ as the exemplar of this capacity. He presents śraddhā as faith in religion and God, and a fervent eagerness to reach Him. He also points to the necessity of faith in the teacher.[66] Samādhāna is the constant practice of fixing the mind on God, while mumukshutvam is the intense desire to be free, born out of an appreciation of the vanity and limitations of sense enjoyments.[67]

Whereas Shankara argues for sādhana-catushtaya as a preparation for śabda-pramāṇa inquiry with the aid of the teacher, Vivekananda adopts the reverse position of using these to argue against scriptural necessity, to denounce the need for study and learning, and to emphasize the secondary role of the intellect in the quest for spiritual knowledge. Nothing more than the cultivation of these disciplines is required, he adds, because the knowledge sought is all within.[68] He sees sādhana-catushtaya as a preparation for the purification of the heart rather than as a training of the intellect or reason. This purification is all that is necessary.

> The pure heart is the best mirror for the reflection of truth, so all these disciplines are for the purification of the heart. And as soon as it is pure, all truths flash upon it in a minute; all the truth in the universe will manifest in your heart, if you are sufficiently pure.

> The great truths about atoms, and the finer elements, and the fine perceptions of men were discovered ages ago by men who never saw a telescope, or a microscope, or a laboratory. How did they know all these things? It was through the heart; they purified the heart.69

This training, he contends, takes us beyond the senses, and he seems to suggest that all bondages will naturally fall off when one has cultivated these qualities.[70] As far as other general qualifications are concerned, Vivekananda adopted a much more liberal attitude, in some respects, than Shankara. Shankara did not challenge the orthodox position of the right of only the three upper castes to study the Vedas. The śūdras were debarred.[71] Vivekananda adopted the position that there was no bar of sex, race or caste to realization. He severely chastises Shankara for his lack of liberality in this respect, and accuses him of fanatical brahmin pride.[72] He seems, on the other hand, to support Shankara's position that only the samnyāsin can attain to the fullness of brahmajñāna.[73]

> Nobody attains freedom without shaking off the coils of worldly worries. The very fact that somebody lives the worldly life proves that he is tied down to it as the bond-slave of some craving or other. Why otherwise would he cling to that life at all? He is the slave either of lust or gold, of position or of fame, of learning or of scholarship. It is only after freeing oneself from all this thraldom that one can get along on the way of freedom. Let people argue as loud as they please; I have got this conviction that unless the monastic life is embraced, none is going to be saved, no attainment of Brahmajnana is possible.74

His attacks on householders were often quite scathing. He suggested that the gulf between the householder and the samnyāsin was wide and unbridgeable, and that the former are incapable of sincerity, but of necessity must possess some selfish motive. He would not believe God to be sincere if he incarnated as a householder. He even

spoke of the repulsive odour of householders. In this context, one must admit that Vivekananda appears as partisan as Shankara was with respect to caste. Views like these seem to contradict his declared aim of making Vedānta a practical religion, accessible to all.

7.5 The Claim to a New Formula for Vedic Exegesis

In our study of Shankara, we have seen his view that the single purport of the Upanishads is to reveal the identity between ātman and brahman.[75]

> And it is not proper to explain these texts otherwise than literally, for they are meant to show that the individual Self is no other than the Supreme Brahman.76
>
> Moreover, the ultimate aim of all the Upaniṣads is to teach Self-knowledge.77

This conviction about the cardinal intention of all sentences of the Upanishads is the governing principle of Shankara's exegetical method. We have seen that in his commentaries, he sets himself the task of resolving apparent contradictions, and establishing that all the sentences of the Upanishads could be reconciled in the light of this central aim.

Vivekananda, on the other hand, claims this assumption to be an unsatisfactory criterion for Vedic exegesis. He suggests that both Advaita and Dvaita commentators are constrained to resort to text-torturing in their attempt to prove that either view is the exclusive theme of the

Upanishads. The Advaita commentator retains Advaita texts and juggles with the Dvaita ones, while his rival adopts the reverse procedure. Vivekananda feels that this is facilitated by the intricacy and complexity of the Sanskrit language.[78] Vivekananda seems to clearly accept that there are texts in the Vedas which are entirely dualistic and others which are truly monistic. He suggests that it is absurd to set out to demonstrate that all texts are either monistic or dualistic, and accuses Shankara of occasionally resorting to sophistry to sustain his conclusions.[79] Vivekananda felt that the time had come for a better and more faithful interpretation of the purport of the Vedas and reconciliation of their apparent contradictions. It was just such an interpretation, he claims, which suggested itself to him by his acquaintance with Ramakrishna.

> It was given to me to live with a man who was as ardent a dualist, as ardent an Advaitist, as ardent a Bhakta, as a Jnani. And living with this man first put it into my head to understand the Upanishads and the texts of the scriptures from an independent and better basis than by blindly following the commentators; and in my opinion and in my researches, I came to the conclusion that these texts are not at all contradictory.80

Vivekananda's new formula for Vedic exegesis is derived from his conclusion that it is possible to trace three distinct phases in the evolution of Vedic thought about the nature of God. Firstly, there was a very personal concept of God as an extra-cosmic deity. This soon gave way to an emphasis on the immanence of God in the universe, and culminated in identifying the human soul with God. This development is one from dualism to qualified monism, ending in monism.[81] He denies that Advaita is the only phase of thought in the Vedas. The significant exegetical

point about this claim, however, is his denial that these three phases of thought are in any way contradictory to each other.

> One cannot exist without the other; one is the fulfilment of the other; one is the building, the other is the top; the one the root, the other the fruit, and so on.82

Vivekananda sees it as a deliberate method of the Vedas to reveal a progressive development to the ultimate goal.[83] In these texts, he contends, it is possible to trace the development of religious ideas. The reason is because old ideas were not discarded when higher truths were discovered. The authors realised that there would always be aspirants for whom the earlier steps were still necessary.[84] Vivekananda is alluding to the doctrine of adhikārībheda, the idea of different grades of aspirants. He also refers to the method of arundhatī darsana nyāya which Shankara uses to demonstrate a particular method of unfolding brahman in the Upanishads.[85] Vivekananda, however, sees it as the wider method of progressive development from dualism to non-dualism.[86]

In spite of Vivekananda's powerful advocacy of this formula for reconciling conflicting texts in the Vedas, there were occasions when he expressed equally strong reservations about this view and method. In fact, he seems to repudiate it entirely and challenges what he sees as the expression of this doctrine in the Bhagavadgītā (3:26):

> Let no wise man unsettle the mind of the ignorant people attached to action; but acting in harmony with Me let him render all action attractive.

It is contradictory, he claims, to argue that knowledge

and enlightenment can lead to error and confusion. It is a doctrine of compromise, he avers, born out of a fear of challenging local and regional customs and prejudices. He accuses the rishis of having a selfish motive.

> They knew that by this enlightenment on their special subject they would lose their superior position of instructors to the people. Hence their endeavour to support this theory. If you consider a man too weak to receive these lessons, you should try the more to teach and educate him; you should give him the advantage of more teaching, instead of less, to train up his intellect, so as to enable him to comprehend the more subtle problems. These advocates of adhikarivada ignored the tremendous fact of the infinite possibilities of the human soul. Every man is capable of receiving knowledge if it is imparted in his own language.87

Although it is not within the scope of our study to treat in full the wider implications of Vivekananda's theory of the progressive development of religious thought in the Vedas, we may note briefly that he applied this view to the understanding of the growth of ideas in other religious traditions as well, and employed it as a central concept for inter-religious harmony. The fundamental premise, however, is that non-duality is the unavoidable goal of the human religious quest. Movement in religious thought is not therefore, a growth from error to truth, but from a lower to a higher truth. All religions, he claims, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, reflect attempts to grasp the infinite. The world of religions is, as he puts it, "only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal".[88] The end here is the infinity of the Self, and this is attained by different paths. He distinguishes between the paths and the goal. Each one is entitled to choose his own path, but the path

is not the goal. This is the clue to his often voiced concept of unity in diversity. The unifying factor is the common goal, and diversity, the means adopted for its attainment. Each religion therefore, can be positioned at some point along the approach to the final non-dual truth.

> All religions are so many stages. Each one of them represents the stages through which the human soul passes to realise God. Therefore, not one of them should be neglected. None of the stages are dangerous or bad. They are good. Just as a child becomes a young man, and a young man becomes an old man, so they are travelling from truth to truth; they become dangerous only when they become rigid, and will not move further - when he ceases to grow.89

In this broad view, he sees the possibility of accepting all religious doctrines, not as an act of patronizing, but with the full conviction that, "they are true manifestations of the same truth, and that they all lead to the same conclusions as the Advaita has reached".[90] He also traces for all religious traditions, the three major phases of development which he claimed to have discovered in the Vedas.[91]

In the matter of Vedic exegesis, we can draw attention to an important contrast between Shankara and Vivekananda. We have already discussed in detail Shankara's division of the Vedas into the karmakāṇḍa and the jñānakāṇḍa and the distinctions which he makes between them.[92] Vivekananda adopts the same two divisions and distinguishes between them in several ways.[93] He identifies the ideal of the karmakāṇḍa as the attainment of enjoyment here and hereafter. The aim is not total freedom from karma. He enumerates four important differences between both sections:

1. The Upanishads posit a belief in God and His unity.
2. Although the Upanishads accept the operation of the law of karma and man's bondage to it, they do not accept that it is absolutely inescapable, and suggest a way out.
3. The Upanishads condemn rituals and sacrifices, particularly those involving the slaying of animals, and point out the limitations of what can be achieved through sacrifices. The gains are only temporary.
4. Finally, the Upanishads enjoin renunciation rather than enjoyment. While it is clear that the differences pointed out by Vivekananda coincide with those of Shankara on the points of aspirant, subject matter and fruit or result, Vivekananda never mentions the difference of connection (sambandha) which Shankara repeatedly alludes to. This appears to us to be an extremely significant omission. To quickly remind ourselves, Shankara sees the karmakāṇḍa as providing us with knowledge about ends which are not yet existent. These must be brought into being by some appropriate action. In other words, knowledge is not the end in itself. The knowledge unfolded in the jñānakāṇḍa, however, is centred on an already existent brahman. Knowledge here is an end in itself, and the connection is between a revealed entity and the appropriate means of revelation. We are suggesting that this is an important point of divergence, for it conclusively demonstrates, along with everything we have earlier discussed in this chapter, that Vivekananda does not see the knowledge that is gained by inquiry into the

words and sentences of the Upanishads as an end in itself. We have noted his description of these as theoretical or second-hand religion, and his call that their claims are to be verified by a form of direct perception.

Although Vivekananda's claim to have discovered a novel and more satisfactory way of interpreting and reconciling apparently conflicting texts of the Upanishads appears at first sight to differ from Shankara's method, the divergence does not seem to be an absolutely radical one. Shankara does not deny the presence of dualistic texts in the whole of the Vedas. He accepts, for example, that the ritualistic prescriptions of the karmakāṇḍa are based on an outlook of duality, and that these are intended for aspirants of a different order as compared to the jñānakānda. Shankara therefore, clearly accepts the fact of differing needs and capabilities in individuals, and sees the śruti also as recognizing this diversity. What he strongly denies, however, is the ultimate truth or reality of this duality. It appears to us that the really important argument, from an exegetical viewpoint, is that non-duality is the final and ultimately valid doctrine of the Vedas. On this question, there is no difference between Vivekananda and Shankara.

7.6 Contrasts between the Statements of Vivekananda on the Vedas in the West and in India

In trying to form a composite picture of Vivekananda's

understanding of the nature, role and authority of the Vedas, one is struck by significant divergences of content and tone between views expressed in America and Europe, and those in India. The differences are particularly apparent from close analysis of the series of talks delivered by him in India after returning from his first Western visit (15 January 1897)and before his departure for his second lecture tour (20 June 1899). In the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, the talks are famously titled, "Lectures from Colombo to Almora".[94] It is to a consideration of the significance of these differences that we now turn our attention.

In India, there was a greater overall emphasis on the authority of the Vedas, and this took different forms of expression. One of the common methods was a reiteration of the orthodox distinction between śruti and smṛiti.[95] The latter, according to him, are written by the sages, but they are not the final authority. In instances of contradiction between both groups of texts, smṛiti has to be rejected. He saw the declarations of the smṛitis as being binding under particular circumstances, times and places. Smritis, in other words, treat the variable dimensions of religion, while śruti is concerned with its eternal aspects.

> As essential conditions changed, as various circumstances came to have their influence on the race, manners and customs had to be changed, and these smritis, as mainly regulating the manners and customs of the nation, had also to be changed from time to time...The principles of religion that are in the Vedanta are unchangeable. Why? Because they are all built upon the eternal principles

> that are in man and nature; they can never change. Ideas about the soul, going to heaven, and so on can never change; they were the same thousands of years ago, they are the same today, they will be the same millions of years hence. But those religious practices which are based entirely upon our social position and correlation must change with the changes in society. Such an order, therefore, would be good and true at a certain period and not at another.96

One of the clear reasons for Vivekananda's reassertion of the traditional distinction between śruti and smriti was his attempt to employ it as a suitable basis for introduction of order, and the standardization of religious belief and practice in India. He was disturbed by the prevalence, at the local level, of practices which he saw as being superstitious, and the tendency to assign an authoritative sanction to these. He was particularly incensed by the wide prevalence of certain Tantra practices in his native Bengal, and saw the primacy of the śruti as a way of challenging the authority of texts which approved such customs.[97]

In India, he identified orthodoxy with the acceptance of the authority of the Vedas. "All the philosophers of India who are orthodox have to acknowledge the authority of the Vedanta".[98] He saw clearly that the acceptance of the authority of the Vedas was one of the few common points around which different religious allegiances in India could be united. "The only point where, perhaps, all our sects agree is that we all believe in the scriptures - the Vedas. This perhaps is certain that no man can have a right to be called a Hindu who does not admit the supreme authority of the Vedas".[99] Like his employment of the distinction between śruti and smriti, Vivekananda's stress

on the common authority of the Vedas and his equation of it with orthodoxy must be placed in the wider context of his anxiety for, and commitment to national and religious unity. One of the most common of Vivekananda's themes throughout this triumphal lecture tour was the view that religion constituted the central, indispensable characteristic of national life in India. Almost everyone of his major addresses opened on this text.

> I see that each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality, as in England, artistic life in another, and so on. In India, religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life; and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality - the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries - that nation dies if it succeeds in the attempt.100

In the light of this view on the place of religion in Indian life, Vivekananda thought that all kinds of reform, social and political, should be preceded by and founded upon religious unity and reform. He felt that no other approach would have a sufficient impact. Vivekananda saw quite clearly the difficulties of trying to found a nation on the basis of common ethnicity, language or customs. As far as these factors were concerned, India exhibited a bewildering variety. He felt that religion could be used as the nucleus of an emerging Indian nation.

> The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition, our religion. That is the only common ground, and upon that we shall have to build. In Europe, political ideas form the national unity. In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity. The unity in religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of the future of India.101

Even religion, however, was not an obvious common factor.

Hinduism presented a challenging medley. This is the explanation behind Vivekananda's exertion throughout this lecture tour, perhaps for the first time in the history of Hinduism, to identify and extol what he saw as the common bases of Hinduism. Acceptance of the authority of the Vedas was the paramount tenet of the common features he presented. Among the other common features mentioned by Vivekananda are the concepts of karma and saṃsāra, the cyclical view of creation and dissolution, and the acceptance of the soul to be free from birth and death. He also points to the notion of religion as realization or direct perception.

Along with a new emphasis on orthodoxy and the Vedas as the fountainhead of Hinduism, another revealing contrast is also apparent from his Western statements. In the West, whenever he made a critical statement about the insignificance of scriptural texts, the Vedas were always treated on the same footing with the scriptures of non-Hindu religions. In India, however, this equality was replaced by an equation of non-Hindu scriptures with the smṛitis. Like the smṛiti texts of Hinduism, their validity is now seen as a secondary one, to be evaluated only with reference to the śruti.

> Therein lies the difference between the scriptures of the Christians or the Buddhists and ours; theirs are all Puranas, and not scriptures, because they describe the history of the deluge, and the history of kings and reigning families, and record the lives of great men, and so on. This is the work of the Puranas, and so far as they agree with the Vedas, they are perfectly good. ,So far as the Bible and the scriptures of other nations agree with the Vedas, they are perfectly good, but when they do not agree, they are no more to be accepted.102

He describes the Vedas as the best preserved scriptures of all religious traditions.[103] Like the smṛitis, non-

Hindu scriptures have been written by particular sages.[104] Although Vivekananda does not deny the efficacy of other texts, he asserts the primacy of the Vedas.

> Although the supersensuous vision of truth is to be met with in some measure in our Puranas and Itihasas and in the religious scriptures of other races, still the fourfold scripture known among the Aryan race as the Vedas being the first, the most complete, and the most undistorted collection of spiritual truths, deserve to occupy the highest place among all scriptures, command the respect of all nations of the earth, and furnish the rationale of all their respective scriptures.105

In India, he asserted that everything necessary for the perfection and freedom of man could be found in the Vedas. Śruti is presented as the final word on spiritual truth, beyond which there is nothing to be known or said. There is no religious idea anywhere, he claims, which cannot be found in the Vedas. All that needs to be done is to apply the dicta of the śruti to the changing needs and conditions of societies.[106]

At the beginning of our present discussion, we presented Vivekananda's contention that the Vedas are the results of the direct perception of the āptas, and that they are valid only because the āptas are competent persons. A clear contrast of emphasis with this view emerges from scrutiny of his talks in India. Here, he insisted upon the impersonal nature of Vedic authority, and differentiated this sharply from the personal authoritative foundations of all other religious traditions.

> Excepting our own almost all the other great religions in the world are inevitably connected with the life of one or more of their founders. All their theories, their teachings, their doctrines, and their ethics are built round the life of a personal founder, from

whom they get their sanction, their authority, and their power; and strangely enough, upon the historicity of the founder's life is built, as it were, all the fabric of such religions. If there were one blow dealt to the historicity of that life, as has been the case in modern times with the lives of almost all the so called founders of religion - we know that half of the details of such lives is not now seriously believed in, and the other half is seriously doubted - if this becomes the case, if that rock of historicity, as they pretend to call it, is shaken and shattered, the whole building tumbles down, broken absolutely, never to regain its lost status.107

In several ways, he contrasts this personal authority with what he now highlights as the impersonal character of Vedic authority. The Vedas, he says, are not the utterance of any persons, and do not owe their authority to anybody. The authority of the Vedas, he now claims, is not even dependent on reasoning. Whereas he had formerly complained about the absoluteness of scriptural authority over even the incarnations, he now glorifies this fact.

> That you obey your religion is not because it came through the authority of a sage, no, not even of an Incarnation. Krishna is not the authority of the Vedas, but the Vedas are the authority of Krishna himself. His glory is that he is the greatest preacher of the Vedas that ever existed.108

Vedānta, he stresses, is grounded in impersonal principles, for no human being can claim to have created the Vedas, but only to have discovered its eternal truths. At the same time, he argues that these impersonal principles are not opposed to personalities, but allow sufficent scope for them. The principles remain unaffected by the lack of historicity of particular persons.[109]

In his lectures in the West, whenever Vivekananda spoke about the concept of Vedic eternity, he usually drew an analogy with natural or scientific laws. The eternity

of the Vedas, he pointed out on these occasions, did not mean the eternity of books composed of words and sentences. He identified the Vedas with spiritual laws and concluded that the concept of Vedic eternity meant the changeless and timeless nature of these laws.[110] This interpretation was also presented in India, but there were significant differences. In the first place, the idea of eternity was more frequently, elaborately and emphatically stated. Secondly, he did not always manifestly distinguish between the Vedas as spiritual laws and as words and sentences. In fact, he seemed on occasions to be moving much closer to the traditional orthodox position.

In India, he voiced his scepticism about Western scholarship on the dating of the Vedas. The Vedas, he says, can and never have been dated because they are eternal.[111] Hindus, he affirms, do not subscribe to the opinion that parts of the Vedas were produced at different times, but that they were brought into being as a whole. They do not share the view that the Vedas were written by men in some remote age.[112] His stress was upon the unwritten and ahistorical nature of the Vedas. He advanced non-historicity as an argument in favour of their validity.[113]

Modern writers on Vivekananda generally contend that there is little or no deviation in his views from Advaita as systematized and given expression by Shankara. T.M.P. Mahadevan, a distinguished contemporary Hindu scholar, writes,

> The Advaita which Swami Vivekananda teaches in his speeches and writings is, in essence, the same gospel whose consolidation and comprehensive exposition we owe to Sri Sankaracharya.114

Rama Shanker Srivastava comes to the same conclusion.

> The concept of salvation and Jñānayoga as a path or discipline leading to it are ancient and traditional. The metaphysics and disciplines of Vivekananda do not deviate an inch from the standpoint of the Advaita Vedānta of Shankaracharya.115

These representative judgements posit a very wide consensus of opinion between Shankara and Vivekananda. In the present chapter, we are specifically concerned with their respective understandings of the nature, role and authority of the Vedas. We have already explicitly drawn attention to some important differences of view. The dissimilarities between Vivekananda's statements in India and the West are important in any evaluation. It appears to us that whereas, in his Western talks, Vivekananda was at liberty to unreservedly express his views, in India there were constraints and concerns which did not allow the same freedom. The principal of these concerns, which we have already noted, was his passion for national unity, and his conviction that this could only be achieved on the basis of religious unity. We have also remarked, in this respect, on his generalization of the common features of Hinduism and the prominence which he gave to the acceptance of Vedic authority as one of these features. In a tradition of such internal diversity and a plurality of authoritative sources, Vivekananda felt that a commonly accepted authority was indispensable. It could serve both as a focus of unity and a platform for the challenge and reform of objectionable religious practice.

There is another even more important reason why Vivekananda's statements in the West could be seen as more truly representative of his position.[116] These statements are fully consistent with a central conviction of all his lectures and writings. This is the doctrine that religious truth is only acquired by an experience of direct perception or apprehension, and not by inquiry into words and sentences of any revelatory text. This is a view which he unfailingly hammered, and which may, with good reason, be said to constitute the pivot of his metaphysics. He was always consistent in this position, and did not deviate in India. In one of his Indian lectures, he states,

> This is the Rishihood, the ideal in our religion. The rest, all these talks and reasonings and philosophies and dualisms and monisms, and even the Vedas themselves are but preparations, secondary things. The other is primary. The Vedas, grammar, astronomy, etc., all these are secondary; that is the supreme knowledge which makes us realise the Unchangeable One. Those who realised are the sages whom we find in the Vedas: and we understand how this Rishi is the name of a type, of a class, which every one of us, as true Hindus, is expected to become at some period of our life, and becoming which, to the Hindu, means salvation. Not belief in doctrines, not going to thousands of temples, nor bathing in all the rivers in the world, but becoming the Rishi, the Mantra-drashta - that is freedom, that is salvation.117

From our survey of Shankara and Vivekananda, it is this issue which emerges as the central and very radical point of departure.

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5, we have examined in detail Shankara's treatment of the Vedas as a valid source of knowledge. We have outlined the various arguments tendered by him for justifying śabda as the only pramāṇa of brahman, his view of śabda-pramāṇa as the adequate and self-sufficient means for giving rise to brahmajñāna, and his conclusion

that nothing beyond the inquiry into the words and sentences of the Upanishads is necessary for brahmajñāna. Actions may facilitate the gain of knowledge from the pramāna, but do not themselves constitute direct sources of knowledge. We have seen that in Shankara's commentaries, the authoritativeness of śruti is independent and self-sufficient. The authority of the Upanishads does not depend upon verification from any other source of knowledge. To suggest this would imply, for Shankara, an alternative and superior pramāna for brahmajñāna and dethrone the svatah-prāmānya (self-validity) status of the Upanishads.

Our earlier scrutiny of Vivekananda's statements on the Vedas and scriptural revelation in general reveals a point of view which is unqualifiedly opposed to Shankara's position. We can conclude our discussion here by bringing together and highlighting these antithetical arguments. We have examined several analogies used by Vivekananda (e.g. map, almanac), all of which illustrate the contents of the Vedas as a poor substitute. He has argued that the assertions of the Vedas are only to be considered as provisionally true, and that they become knowledge only when verified by direct apprehension. His distinction between knowledge afforded by śruti and realization reinforces this argument, and so does his emphasis on the necessity of going beyond śruti. He speaks of scriptures as "theoretical religion", and as one of its non-essential aspects. The Vedas, he contends, cannot give knowledge of the ātman. All of this stands in unmistakable and remarkable contrast to Shankara's svatah-prāmānya view of the

Upanishads and his related arguments. Vivekananda sees Vedānta as a method for attaining superconscious perception rather than as a pramāṇa, and it is revealing that nowhere in his work does one find any detailed consideration of the pramāṇa concept. In fact, the term itself has never been employed directly by him, except on the one occasion of his commentary on the Yoga-sūtras of Patañjali, to which we have already referred.

Like Vivekananda, Shankara also speaks of an ultimate transcendence of the Vedas, but in an entirely different sense and context. For Shankara, the Vedas are transcended in the sense that after producing knowledge, they are no longer necessary as a pramāṇa by the one who has gained brahmajñāna. They are also transcended in the sense that, for the jñānī, their reality is only an empirical one. Unlike Vivekananda, Shankara nowhere speaks of the transcending of the Vedas in the manner of positing an alternative and superior pramāṇa. In our study of Shankara, we have presented his concept of the non-personal (apaurusheya) basis of the authority of the Vedas. He does not seek to establish the authority of the Vedas from the fact of God's omniscience, because of his view that God's existence cannot be demonstrated by any independent reasoning. Vivekananda, on the other hand, advances, in many places, a personal authoritative basis for the Vedas, derived from the competence and reliability of the āptas. In respect of the direct apprehension of religious truth by the ācta, Vivekananda does not suggest any role for īśvara as revealer. His analogy is that of the scientific discovery of natural

laws. Shankara, as we have seen, ascribes to Īśvara the role of revealing the Vedas at the beginning of each cycle of creation. In Shankara, the emphasis is upon the rishis receiving rather than discovering. Consistent with this scientific analogy, Vivekananda often defines the eternity of the Vedas as an eternity of natural spiritual laws, whose existence is independent of their discovery. Shankara on the other hand, conceives of Vedic eternity in the sense of an eternal flow of a fixed body of knowledge. This transmission is initiated in each cycle of creation by Īśvara.

On the basis of Vivekananda's recorded statements, it is very difficult to find an unconditional rationale for the Vedas. This is not surprising in the light of his contention that conclusive and liberating knowledge is not gained by inquiry into the texts of the Upanishads. The closest he comes to a justification of such texts is in his view that they tell us of the spiritual findings of others, and the processes by which we discover and verify such findings for ourselves. The difficulty is that in some of his extreme assertions, he even denies them this limited value and function. This becomes apparent in his argument that the Vedas are only properly understood when one has lifted oneself to the same level of direct perception as its authors, that they were not written for the intellect, and cannot be understood through reasoning. Such statements negate their preliminary value, which one assumes to be dependent on the possibility of some understanding of their claims and methods. If such an understanding cannot be

sought through the faculty of intellectual reasoning, then the scripture seems to be totally deprived of usefulness.

CHAPTER 8

KARMA (WORK), BHAKTI (WORSHIP) AND JÑĀNA (KNOWLEDGE) AS DIRECT AND INDEPENDENT WAYS TO MOKSHA

In Chapter 7, our study of Vivekananda's understanding of the authority and functions of the Vedas revealed that he does not see the knowledge which is directly and immediately derived from those texts as liberating the individual. We noted the important distinction between śruti - derived knowledge and knowledge which he claims can be obtained by direct spiritual perception. While the content of both would be the same, it is the latter alone which carries absolute conviction and freedom from doubt. The Shankara method of the fully qualified aspirant, inquiring into śruti with the aid of a teacher, and following proper exegetical procedures is not at all presented by him as a means to freedom. We have seen his subordinate regard for the words and sentences of the śruti, and his argument that as a record of the experiences of others, these are of little avail. For Vivekananda, śruti is not a self-validating source of knowledge, and we have attempted to highlight this very important area of contrast with Shankara.

It is necessary, however, for the purpose of our discussion in the present chapter, to point out the agreement between

Shankara and Vivekananda on the nature of the fundamental problem of avidyā and its resolution. It is only from this perspective that we can reasonably and justly evaluate Vivekananda's arguments for different independent ways of accomplishing freedom. In Chapter 4.1, we considered Shankara's discussion of the entirely notional problem of avidyā as the basis of his contention that knowledge alone is freedom. Knowledge can alone be freedom where bondage is only apparent, and liberation already accomplished.

In our study of the lectures and writings of Vivekananda, we find a clear consensus with Shankara on this issue. Vivekananda affirms avidyā as the basic human problem and the source of all misery and evil.[1] Like Shankara, he presents the primary manifestation of this ignorance as the erroneous identification of the Self with the body.

It is the assumption of the limitless to be limited.

> All the different sorts of impressions have one source, ignorance. We have first to learn what ignorance is. All of us think, "I am the body, and not the Self, the pure, the effulgent, the ever blissful", and that is ignorance. We think of man, and see man as body. This is the great delusion.2

Vivekananda follows Shankara in presenting avidyā in the light of adhyāsa (superimposition) and illustrates it by employing Shankara's vivid crystal-ball analogy. Like a crystal-ball near a red or blue flower, the Self appears to be impure or limited only by association. It is never so in reality.[3] Bondage is therefore, for Vivekananda, only the thought of being bound, and knowledge alone can confer freedom. Liberty involves nothing more than the destruction of ignorance and it is this knowledge which

is the goal of human endeavour.

> This pure and perfect being, the soul, is one wheel, and this external hallucination of body and mind is the other wheel, joined together by the pole of work, of Karma. Knowledge is the axe which will sever the bond between the two, and the wheel of the soul will stop - stop thinking that it is coming and going, living and dying, stop thinking that it is nature and has wants and desires, and will find that it is perfect, desireless.4

In agreement with Shankara, he continuously asserts that freedom and perfection are not to be conceived as a new attainment. It is a matter of knowing or not knowing.[5] Whereas Shankara often uses the story of the fictitious loss of the tenth man, Vivekananda employs a similar analogy to illustrate a notional loss through ignorance and a gain by knowledge. He frequently tells the story of a pregnant lioness who, in search of prey, died while in pursuit of a flock of sheep. She gave birth to a cub who lived with the flock and thought of itself as a sheep. It ate grass and bleated. Another astonished lion noticed this sheep-lion in the midst of the flock, but could never get close because it always fled in fear with the sheep. One day, however, he managed to isolate the sheep-lion and tried to convince it of its true identity. Not surprisingly, it refused to accept that it was a lion. As a last resort, the elderly lion took it to a nearby lake and pointed out the identity of their reflections. It immediately owned its original nature as a lion.

For both Shankara and Vivekananda, the content of the knowledge which frees is the understanding of the limitless and unbound nature of the Self. For Shankara, this is

the central theme of all the Upanishads, and for Vivekananda it is the progressive culmination of the teachings of these texts. Both men are therefore, clearly in agreement on the fact of knowledge being equivalent to freedom, and on the central content of this knowledge. Vivekananda, however, does not identify liberating knowledge with what is gathered from the exegetical analysis of the Upanishads. He is derisive about this knowledge and sees it as second hand information which is at best only provisionally valid. For him, it is only superficial intellectual knowledge. The claims of the Upanishads must be again directly discovered in the way in which he feels that they were originally apprehended by the authors of these texts. For the attainment of knowledge as he conceives it, Vivekananda proposes the four yogas or karma, bhakti, jñāna and rāja.[6] He unequivocally affirms that the aim of all four yogas is the removal of ignorance.

> There is no becoming with the Absolute. It is ever free, ever perfect; but the ignorance that has covered Its nature for a time is to be removed. Therefore the whole scope of all systems of Yoga (and each religion represents one) is to clear up this ignorance and allow the Ātman to restore its own nature.[7]

These four different paths, according to Vivekananda, converge at the same point, and he claims the support of the scriptures for the view that the attainment of knowledge is possible in a variety of ways. Even though he specifically mentions the jñānakāṇḍa as propounding this argument, he does not cite any texts.[8]

It is important to note that Vivekananda sees each one of these methods as directly and independently capable

of leading to knowledge and freedom. One frequently encounters statements of the following kind.

> You must remember that the freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas, and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Buddha was a working Jnāni, Christ was a Bhakta, but the same goal was reached by both of them.9
>
> Each one of our Yogas is fitted to make man perfect even without the help of the others, because they have all the same goal in view. The Yogas of work, of wisdom, and of devotion are all capable of serving as direct and independent means for the attainment of Moksha.10

He does not see the different methods as being in conflict or in contradiction with each other. His rationale for a plurality of means is derived from the variety of human personalities. Each one is adapted to a different nature and temperament. He generalizes the variety of human beings into four types. First of all, there is the active, energetic temperament, the worker, for whom is meant karmayoga. Secondly, there is the emotional man who discovers his method in bhaktiyoga. Finally, jñānayoga is intendend for the philosophical and rational mind, while rājayoga satisfies the mystically oriented person.[11]

We can now turn our attention to considering how Vivekananda understands these different methods, and the way in which they lead to jñāna. We are not concerned here with presenting all that he has to say about each method. We shall be focusing on the basic nature of each yoga as he understands it and assessing particularly the connection he establishes with the removal of avidyā. The validity of his claim that each method is a direct and independent path to moksha depends on his demonstration of the capability of each

one to remove ignorance. The latter is, from his own standpoint, the fundamental problem.

8.1 Karmayoga

There is no single discussion in the lectures and writings of Vivekananda where one can turn to find a clear and comprehensive statement of his understanding of karmayoga. What exactly constitutes karmayoga is therefore, not as obvious and apparent as it is in Shankara.

Vivekananda defines karma very broadly to refer to any kind of action, mental or physical.[12] He describes various personal motives from which individuals act. Among these are the desires for wealth, fame, power and heaven. He suggests that higher than all of these motives is work for work's sake, which he explains to mean working just for the good which comes out of it. Good, in this case, appears to indicate results which are beneficial to others.[13] In searching for his central definition of karmayoga, the concept which emerges most often, therefore, is the idea of unselfish action.

> It is the most difficult thing in this world to work and not to care for the result, to help a man and never think that he ought to be grateful, to do some good work and at the same time never look to see whether it brings you name or fame, or nothing at all. Even the most arrant coward becomes brave when the world praises him. A fool can do heroic deeds when the approbation of society is upon him, but for a man to constantly do good without caring for the approbation

> of his fellow men is indeed the highest sacrifice man can perform.14

Although Vivekananda often speaks of karmayoga as an attitude of indifference to the results of action, one has to suppose that the unconcern is with personal selfish results only. A total unconcern with results will make even action for the sake of others impossible, for it is difficult to see how any action could be initiated without some end in view.

In addition to implying actions centred on the welfare and service of others, karmayoga also comprises a number of attitudes, two of which find frequent mention in Vivekananda. The first of these is the recognition of work as a privilege of worshipping God by serving Him in all men. The karmayogī does not serve others because he views his help as being indispensable, but because the occasions of service are opportunites for ridding himself of selfishness and advancing towards perfection. The act of service is ultimately beneficial to the karmayogī.

> Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him. Cut out this word "help" from your mind. You cannot help; it is blaspheming. You are here yourself at His pleasure. Do you mean to say, you help Him? You worship. When you give a morsel of food to the dog, you worship the dog as God. God is in that dog. He is the dog. He is all and in all. We are allowed to worship Him. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe, and then will come perfect non-attachment. This should be your duty. This is the proper attitude of work. This is the secret taught by Karma-Yoga.15

This attitude of work as worship, the giving up of all fruits of action to God, is one way, according to Vivekananda, by which the karmayogī achieves detachment from the results of action.[16] One suspects, however, that in order to emphasize the distinction between karmayoga and bhaktiyoga, Vivekananda

insists that this detachment is also possible even for one who does not believe in Īśvara. In this case, he insists that detachment has to be accomplished by the force of will. He justifies this by a recourse to Sāmkhya, where Īśvara is not presupposed, and suggests that detachment is also possible by adopting an attitude of the world as a temporary place of abode, meant only for the education of the soul. Instead of identifying with nature, it should be viewed as a book to be read and then disposed of.[17] Whether through the acceptance of Īsvara or not, the karmayogī's attitude is characterized by a detachment from concern with the personal rewards of action.

> The Karma-Yogi works because it is his nature, because he feels that it is good for him to do so, and he has no object beyond that. His position in this world is that of a giver, and he never cares to receive anything. He knows that he is giving, and does not ask for anything in return and, therefore, he eludes the grasp of misery. The grasp of pain, whenever it comes, is the result of the reaction of "attachment".18

The view that karmayoga does not necessitate a belief in Īśvara highlights an important difference between Shankara and Vivekananda. With Shankara, there hardly seems to be any distinction between karmayoga and bhaktiyoga. The form of detached activity Shankara conceives is that which is possible by the dedication of all actions to Īśvara, and the calm acceptance of results as coming from Him. Karmayoga is therefore, not possible without an appreciation of Īśvara, and of him as the dispenser of the fruits of action.[19]

The karmayogī's attitude to work is also characterized by an absence of fanaticism. He is non-fanatical because

of his recognition of the limitations of all that he does. He knows that in spite of all of his efforts the world will never be made perfect. Vivekananda often describes the world as a dog's curly tail, which always bends in spite of efforts to straighten it.[20] The karmayogī also frees himself from fanaticism and self-importance by the awareness of his own dispensability.

In Vivekananda, as contrasted with Shankara, one notices the attempt to enlarge the concept of karmayoga. In most cases, however, his rationale for the inclusion of a particular concept within the framework of karmayoga is not sufficiently clear or justified. The result is that the karmayoga concept becomes unwieldly and almost all-inclusive, blurring Vivekananda's aim of identifying it as a distinctive path to moksha. Without any development of argument, he claims, for example, that karmayoga has specially to do with the understanding of the three gunas and their employment for success in activity. He also identifies karmayoga with the idea of variation in morality and duty according to life circumstances.[21] In the course of the same discussion, he contends that the central idea of karmayoga is non-resistance.

> The Karma-Yogi is the man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and who also knows that this non-resistance is the highest manifestation of power in actual possession, and also what is called the resisting of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this highest power, namely, non-resistance.22

Vivekananda supports this view by a very unusual interpretation of Arjuna's predicament in the first chapter of the Bhagavadgītā, and Krishna's subsequent instruction to him. His argument

is that Arjuna was terrified of the opposing army and masked his cowardly feelings by arguments about love. Krishna's goal was to lead him to the ideal of non-resistance, but this could not be accomplished without initiation into resistance to purge him of cowardice. Within the concept of karmayoga, Vivekananda also sees a natural place for the study and practice of rituals and "symbology", as well as for an understanding of the nature and force of words and other sound symbols and their use.[23]

We have already drawn attention to Vivekananda's attempt to underline the distinctiveness of karmayoga from bhaktiyoga by arguing that the former does not necessarily depend on the acceptance of īśvara. He conceives the possibility of unselfish and detached action without the belief in God. For him, the essential factor about karmayoga as a path is its emphasis on work. It is meant for those whose minds cannot be applied on the plane of thought alone and whose natures demand some sort of activity. For such people, Vivekananda claims, karmayoga teaches where and how to work successfully. In order to further strengthen his claim for karmayoga as a direct independent path to jñāna, Vivekananda distinguishes it, one supposes from jñānayoga, by describing it as being free from all doctrines and dogma. This a conclusion about karmayoga which he reiterates throughout his treatment of this path.

> The Karma-Yogi need not believe in any doctrine whatever. He may not believe even in God, may not ask what his soul is, nor think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special aim of realising selflessness; and he has to work it out himself. Every moment of

> his life must be realisation, because he has to solve by mere work, without the help of doctrine or theory, the very problem to which the Jnani applies his reason and inspiration and the Bhakta his love.24

This is a most puzzling conclusion which critical examination of his statements on karmayoga finds very difficult to sustain. His views are clearly loaded with explicit and implicit doctrinal assumptions. These are clearly evident when his discussion presupposes īśvara, for there are definite concepts of the nature of God involved, but they are no less so when this standpoint is not presumed. The obvious fact is that one embarks on this path of detached activity only after certain conclusions about the nature of existence and the ultimacy of moksha as the goal of life. The lack of concern with the personal rewards of action is not absolute, for karmayoga is presented as a method adopted with a definite aim in mind. Through unselfish detached action, the karmayogī hopes to be free. In spite of what Vivekananda says therefore, the action of the karmayogī is not, and cannot be an end in itself.

We should at this point make the observation that Vivekananda nowhere distinguishes between karmayoga as means and as end. One gets the impression that the possibility of selflessness is assumed from the beginning, without considering the very personal aim of the karmayogī. The distinction between karmayoga as means and end is more clearly preserved in Shankara, who appears to see the possibility of unselfish action only after the karmayogī has attained to the fullness of Self which brahmajñāna confers.

From the logic of Vivekananda's presentation of the problem of avidyā, it would appear that he also must accept that complete unselfishness is not possible without Self-knowledge. The unresolved paradox is that in his presentation of karmayoga, he assumes that one cannot attain to Self-knowledge unless one is perfectly selfless. In fact, in spite of his non-acknowledgement of it, and his claim that karmayoga as a path involves no doctrines or dogma, the karmayoga he presents is intelligible only in the doctrinal context of Advaita. Its rationale is to be found there only. This is unconcealed in the following kind of discussion, quite common in his karmayoga presentation, and suffused with Advaita postulates and premises.

> Therefore Karma-Yoga tells us to enjoy the beauty of all the pictures in the world, but not to identify ourselves with any of them. Never say "mine"...If you do, then will come the misery. Do not say "my house", do not say "my body". The whole difficulty is there. The body is neither yours, nor mine, nor anybody's. These bodies are coming and going by the laws of nature but we are free, standing as witness. The body is no more free than a picture or a wall. Why should we be attached so much to a body? If somebody paints a picture, he does it and passes on. Do not project that tentacle of selfishness, "I must possess it". As soon as that is projected, misery will begin.25

In these kinds of passages karmayoga appears to be more the result of Self-knowledge, to be possible only through Self-knowledge, rather than as a means to it. If karmayoga is to be distinguished from jñānayoga by the absence of any doctrinal postulates, then Vivekananda has not at all proved this. The knowledge which is its declared aim to discover is already presupposed at the inception. Vivekananda's claim therefore, that the karmayogī is or can be indifferent to doctrine is unsustainable. As an independent path,

it does not exist in a doctrinal vacuum and cannot be said to be unique on this basis. Vivekananda has nowhere defined what exactly he means by doctrine or dogma, but one wonders if his view is not somehow made explicable by proposing that the Advaita contentions have such an axiomatic character for him, that they easily slip into his discussion as unquestionable propositions.

But perhaps, the most problematical aspect of Vivekananda's discussion on this matter is the connection he aims to establish between karmayoga and moksha. It is here also that other important contrasts with Shankara are evident. In evaluating this connection, it is very important to bear in mind Vivekananda's consensus with Shankara on the apparent nature of bondage through avidyā, and the simple necessity of knowledge for its removal. Each different path, he claims, is an independent and direct means to this knowledge. It is clear therefore, that he presents these yogas as having the same function which śruti as śabda-pramāṇa has for Shankara. They are supposed, in their distinct ways, to give rise directly to brahmajñāna, and remove the notional bondage of the Self.

In Shankara, the function of karmayoga, as of all other methods, techniques and disciplines apart from jñāna, is the development of the requisite qualities of intellect and emotion, prior to inquiry into śabda-pramāṇa. The disciplines themselves never assume the function of sources of knowledge, for only the accepted valid pramāṇas can give rise to knowledge. The disciplines, however, are

necessary for mental purity (citta-śuddhi). Vivekananda also accepts that mental purification is the most important aim of karmayoga. Because of his view of karmayoga as a path of detached selfless activity, mental purity is the attainment of unselfishness and indifference to personal rewards.

> We have seen already that in helping the world we help ourselves. The main effect of work done for others is to purify ourselves. By means of the constant effort to do good to others we are trying to forget ourselves; this forgetfulness of self is the one great lesson we have to learn in life.26

Vivekananda's radical departure from Shankara is his contention that this unselfishness and detachment directly bring about Self-knowledge. He does not mention any intervening need for inquiry into a pramāna.

> We must do the work and find out the motive power that prompts us; and, almost without exception, in the first years, we shall find that our motives are always selfish; but gradually this selfishness will melt by persistence, till at last will come the time when we shall be able to do really unselfish work. We may all hope that some day or other, as we struggle through the paths of life, there will come a time when we shall become perfectly unselfish; and the moment we attain to that, all our powers will be concentrated and the knowledge which is ours will be manifest.27

> To attain this unattachment is almost a life-work, but as soon as we have reached this point, we have attained the goal of love and become free; the bondage of nature falls from us, and we see nature as she is; she forges no more chains for us; we stand entirely free and take not the results of work into consideration; who then cares for what the results may be?28

> This attainment does not depend on any dogma, or doctrine or belief. Whether one is a Christian, or Jew, or Gentile, it does not matter. Are you unselfish? That is a question. If you are, you will be perfect without reading a single book, without going into a single church or temple.29

Ignorance is presented as somehow falling away with the cultivation of selflessness and detachment. We have already commented on the fallacy of Vivekananda's assertion that

karmayoga is free from and does not necessitate any concern with doctrine or dogma. We have shown the presupposition and inextricable involvement of Advaita postulates throughout his discussion. Even if one were to grant that the selflessness and detachment of which Vivekananda speaks are possible without any Advaita presumptions, it is still difficult to grasp how their accomplishment leads to freedom in the Advaita sense. Within the context of Advaita, attachment and selfishness are the symptoms of avidyā. They are the expressions of avidyā and not the cause of it. Their overcoming would still appear to leave the fundamental problem of avidyā and bondage unresolved.

The very few areas of discussion where one encounters attempts to develop in more detail the relationship between karmayoga and moksha are still not satisfactory. One always has to accept the supposition that avidyā, by some means or other, spontaneously falls away in the automatic manifestation of brahmajñāna. Very often, in making the connection between karmayoga and moksha, Vivekananda's language becomes hazy and imprecise, and there is a tendency to reformulate the nature of the problem and the goal to be attained. Selfishness, for example, rather than avidyā is described as the root of bondage.[30] The goal is presented as that of self-abnegation, and karmayoga, by its emphasis on the service of others, leads to this by encouraging self-forgetfulness and humility. This is identified by Vivekananda with nivritti (renunciation).[31]

> We become forgetful of the ego when we think of the body as dedicated to the service of others - the body with which most complacently we identify the ego. And in the long run comes the consciousness of disembodiedness. The more intently you think of the well-being of others, the more oblivious of self you become. In this way, as gradually your heart gets purified by work, you will come to feel the truth that your own Self is pervading all beings and all things. Thus it is that doing good to others constitutes a way, a means of revealing one's own Self or Atman. Know this also to be one of the spiritual practices, a discipline for God-realisation. Its aim is also Self-realisation. Exactly as that aim is attained by Jnana (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and so on, also by work for the sake of others.32

Again, however, one cannot but add that from the Advaita viewpoint, avidyā is not simply a problem of exalting or humbling oneself. It is the erroneous apprehension of the Self in the form of adhyāsa (superimposition). Humility, as a virtue which may be concomitant with the service of others, might be more conducive to jñāna than the arrogant exaltation of oneself above all others, but it is difficult to see how it can destroy avidyā and lead to the kind of Self-understanding which brahmajñāna implies. Without any doctrinal presuppositions, the supposedly natural progression which Vivekananda postulates in the above passage from the service of others to a knowledge of the distinction of Self and body, Its non-dual and all-pervasive nature, is difficult to understand. It is not at all clear how such far reaching deductions can be made or how they are self-evident. A "feeling" of affinity with others through service is not the same as a knowledge of the non-duality of the Self.

On another occasion, moksha is identified as "infinite expansion", claimed by Vivekananda to be the goal of all

religious, moral and philosophic doctrines. He identifies this "infinite expansion" with "absolute unselfishness" and claims that karmayoga leads to the former by bringing about the latter.[33] Again, it is not at all clear whether this "infinite expansion" is the same as brahmajñāna, with its implications about the non-dual nature of the Self, and its transcendence of spatial and temporal limitations. In Advaita also, one can only speak figuratively about the "infinite expansion" of the Self. Being, by definition, limitless, such an "expansion" can only be in terms of gaining the knowledge of its infinity. The consistency of this argument and the preciseness of definition and language are not always preserved by Vivekananda in these discussions.

The picture of the relationship between karmayoga and moksha in Vivekananda appears to become even more complicated when one encounters various statements which seem to deny and contradict the position that selfless activity leads directly to Self-knowledge. All work is presented by him as presupposing ignorance, and one must infer therefore, that work is incapable of leading directly to freedom.

> The active workers, however good, have still a little remnant of ignorance left in them. When our nature has yet some impurities left in it, then alone can we work. It is in the nature of work to be impelled ordinarily by motive and attachment...The highest men cannot work, for in them there is no attachment. Those whose soul is gone into the Self, those whose desires are confined in the Self, who have become ever associated with the Self, for them there is no work.34

These are passages in which knowledge is affirmed over and above work as the only means of freedom.

> Salvation means knowing the truth. We do not become anything; we are what we are. Salvation (comes) by faith and not by work. It is a question of knowledge! you must know what you are, and it is done.35

On occasions, the connection between work and freedom is presented only as an indirect one, a position identical with that of Shankara.

> Question: Can Jiva-seva (service to beings) alone give Mukti?
>
> Answer: Jiva-seva can give Mukti not directly but indirectly, through purification of the mind. But if you wish to do a thing properly, you must, for the time being, think that that is all-sufficient.36

Are these two sets of statements, arguing respectively for a direct and indirect connection between karmayoga and moksha, entirely opposed? Is Vivekananda adopting here a position identical with Shankara and implying a need for inquiry into śruti as śabda-pramāṇa? To suggest this would be to go against the main lines of all his arguments about the functions of the śruti, and the relationship between karmayoga and moksha. Besides, even in these statements where he speaks of work as an indirect aid to jñāna, there is definitely no mention of any necessity for inquiry into śruti as a means of gaining the knowledge of brahman. What then do we make of the suggestions in these passages? There is one significant occasion on which Vivekananda gives us a clue to his meaning in these passages.[37] All work, Vivekananda says here, is only useful for removing the "veils" that obscure the "manifestation" of the ātman. After the "veils" have been removed, "the Ātman manifests by Its own effulgence". In this sense, according to Vivekananda, work cannot be said to directly lead to ātmajnana. Vivekananda

cites Shankara for support of this view, but Shankara's position is an entirely different one. For Shankara, there is no concept or question of the ātman manifesting in this manner, for It is never at any time unmanifest. As Awareness, It is always self-revealing, and manifesting and unmanifesting would be misleading terms, although they are quite frequently used by Vivekananda.

We have seen that the problem, as far as Shankara is concerned, is an incorrect apprehension of an ever-revealing ātman. Śabda-pramāṇa is not necessary for making Its existence known, but for correcting false notions about It. For Shankara, however, the self-revelatory nature of the ātman does not imply or is equivalent to a knowledge of Its true nature, and he does not suggest that brahmajñāna is somehow spontaneously manifest without pramāṇa inquiry. In this discussion, Vivekananda does not distinguish between the so-called "manifestation" of the ātman and the knowledge of Its nature. Again, there is a problem of terminological and conceptual clarity and consistency. For if "manifestation" is identical with self-revelatory character, and this again is equal to a knowledge of ātman's nature, there will never be a problem of avidyā for anyone at anytime. If, on the otherhand, "manifestation" is identical with the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, how is this knowledge "manifested" by a Self which, by definition, is free from and beyond all activity?

Although this particular passage helps, to some extent, to clarify some of Vivekananda's apparently contradictory

statements about the indirect nature of work, it does not, however, reconcile all such passages. Perhaps one must also take into consideration what appears to be a tendency in Vivekananda to idealize and extol each path as he describes it, without attempting to reconcile the contradictions arising from this approach. In his discussion, there is no attempt to relate the particularity and possibilities of each method back to the presuppositions and implications of avidyā as the fundamental problem. The result is an obscurity of terminology and concept. Ultimately, we remain unconvinced about the connection between karmayoga as a path of detached selfless activity, and moksha as involving a knowledge of the non-duality of the ātman, Its nature as ultimate reality, and Its transcendence of spatial and temporal limitations.

8.2 Bhaktiyoga

Vivekananda provides several definitions of bhaktiyoga, showing that its singularity lies in love and worship, and that its aim is also identity with the absolute.

> Bhakti-Yoga is a real, genuine search after the Lord, a search beginning, continuing, and ending in love.38

> Bhakti is a series or succession of mental efforts at religious realisation beginning with ordinary worship and ending in a supreme intensity of love for Ishvara.39

> Bhakti-Yoga is the path of systematised devotion for the attainment of union with the Absolute.40

Vivekananda reminds us that love and worship directed only to īsvara can be properly termed bhakti.[41] He is clear that love, as a relationship, cannot obtain with the impersonal, non-dual brahman, free from all qualities (nirguna). As an attitude therefore, bhakti is only possible in relation to brahman as personal Lord, possessed of qualities (saguna). The impersonal and the personal, however, are not conceived of as being distinct.

> Brahman is as the clay or substance out of which an infinite variety of articles is fashioned. As clay, they are all one; but form or manifestation differentiates them. Before every one of them was made, they all existed potentially in the clay, and, of course, they are identical substantially; but when formed, and so long as the form remains, they are separate and different; the clay-mouse can never become a clay-elephant, because, as manifestations, form alone makes them what they are, though as unformed clay they are all one. Ishvara is the highest manifestation of the Absolute Reality, or in other words, the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind. Creation is eternal and so is Ishvara.42

The worship of minor gods (devas) therefore, cannot be described as bhakti. This type of worship is interpreted by Vivekananda as ritualistic, aimed at producing some limited enjoyable result, but never moksha. In the early stages of bhaktiyoga, substitutes and images are necessary and useful, but īśvara should never be completely identified with any of these. Their right role is only to serve as suggestions for the worship of īśvara, who always remains the central focus. Even the lesser gods can, in this manner, function as suggestions for the worship of īśvara, but the attitude is not bhakti when any of these are worshipped as ends in themselves.[43]

Whereas karmayoga is meant for the activity-oriented

nature, bhaktiyoga is conducive to the largely emotional temperament who wants only to love and does not care for abstract definitions of God or philosophical speculation. Vivekananda often identifies bhaktiyoga with the attitudes and ideas of the Purāṇas and describes the method as a concession to the human weakness of dependence.

> So long as there shall be the human weakness of leaning upon somebody for support, these Puranas, in some form or other, must always exist. You can change their names; you can condemn those that are already existing, but immediately you will be compelled to write another Purana.44

He constantly affirms the advantage of bhaktiyoga to be its naturalness and easiness as a method of attaining moksha.[45] This argument is linked with the possibility of renunciation, seen by him as a common demand of all paths. In karmayoga renunciation is in the form of an indifference to the personal rewards of action. In rājayoga it is accomplished by looking upon nature as a school of experience, the purpose of which is to enable the soul to realise its eternal separation from matter. In jñānayoga, which, according to Vivekananda, is the most difficult, the individual has to detach himself by the strength of his reason alone.[46] The renunciation of the bhakta, however, is the smooth and spontaneous consequence of his intense love for īśvara.

> The renunciation necessary for the attainment of Bhakti is not obtained by killing anything, but just comes in as naturally as in the presence of an increasingly stronger light, the less intense ones become dimmer and dimmer until they vanish away completely. So this love of the pleasures of the senses and of the intellect is all made dim and thrown aside and cast into the shade by the love of God Himself.47

In bhaktiyoga, the various human passions and feelings are not viewed as being essentially wrong, but are given a new orientation in a relationship with īśvara. Pleasure

and pain, for example, should not be responses to the gain or loss of wealth, but to the realization or non-realization of love.

Unlike his karmayoga discussion where one finds no descriptions of a progressive development of method, in bhaktiyoga we are provided with details of qualifications required by both student and teacher.[48] As far as the student is concerned, six preparatory qualities are repeatedly mentioned. The first of these is viveka, which, following Ramanuja, he interprets primarily as discrimination in matters of food.[49] Food can be impure as a result of three factors. Firstly, certain kinds of food, meat, for example, are impure by nature. So also are some types of exciting or stimulating foods. Food can also be rendered unsuitable by the presence of external impurities, such as dust or dirt. Finally, food is also affected by the character of the person who prepares or serves it. The idea seems to be that the personality of the individual, by some means or other, transmits itself through the food. This emphasis on food is the result of a link which Vivekananda sees between the quality of thoughts and the nature of food.

The second qualification required of the bhakta is vimoha or freedom from desires. Īśvara alone must be the central ideal of desire. All other ideals and objects in life are useful, not as ends in themselves, but to the extent that they lead to the attainment of bhakti.

The third qualification is abhyāsa or practice. There must be a continuous effort to restrain the mind from the habit of contemplating objects of enjoyment, and fixing its attention on īśvara. In this attempt, he emphasizes the value of music. The fourth qualification is kriyā or good activities. These embrace the daily study of religious texts, the making of offerings to the departed ancestors, the worship of God, and the service of human and non-human beings. The fifth qualification is kalyāṇa or purity, which is realized in attitudes and acts of truthfulness, straightforwardness, compassion, non-injury and charity. Finally, the bhakta should be of a cheerful disposition. A gloomy mind, according to Vivekananda, is incapable of love. At the same time, he cautions against excessive merriment associated with fickleness and unsteadiness of mind. The right attitude is one of calm cheerfulness.

In his discussion of bhaktiyoga as a path to moksha, Vivekananda stresses the role of the guru, and the necessity of faith, humility and submission towards the teacher. The ideal teacher, by whom he appears to mean the avatāra, is self-evident and is immediately recognized by the student.

> When the sun rises, we instinctively become aware of the fact, and when a teacher of men comes to help us, the soul will instinctively know that truth has already begun to shine upon it. Truth stands on its own evidence, it does not require any other testimony to prove it true, it is self-effulgent.50

One can, however, adds Vivekananda, also benefit from lesser teachers, but these have to be evaluated by certain criteria. Three such norms are supplied by him. Firstly, he should know the secret of the scriptures, and Vivekananda

distinguishes this from a knowledge of syntax, etymology and philology.[51] To be a bhakta, for example, according to Vivekananda, there is no need for conclusive historical knowledge of the date of the Bhagavadgītā, or the details of Krishna's life. "You only require to feel the craving for the beautiful lessons of duty and love in the Gita".[52] Secondly, the teacher of bhakti must be sinless, for only one of an impeccable moral stature can communicate spiritual truths. Finally, his motive for teaching must only be love for his disciple. Bhakti grows only in the relationship of a genuine teacher and a fully qualified aspirant.

Bhaktiyoga is presented by Vivekananda as progressing through two stages. The first of these is gaunī or the preparatory stage, when there is still a necessity for myths, symbols, forms, rituals and the repetition of names. All of these are associated with the observance of the formal or ceremonial aspects of religion and are necessary, he says, for the purification of the soul. From the preparatory stages, one moves on to parā bhakti or supreme devotion. Vivekananda, however, does not delineate the details of this transition. Although parā bhakti is inexpressible, it could, he claims, be described on the analogy of human relationships of increasing emotional intensities.[53] The first of these is śānta or the peaceful relationship, just above the ceremonial or ritual aspects of worship, and lacking in intensity of feeling. Higher than this is the dāsya or servant attitude, the perception of īśvara as master, and of oneself as servant. Next comes sakhya or the relationship of friendship. Here

Īśvara is viewed as the beloved friend who is always near, and to whom one's heart is open. It is almost a relationship of equals, and God is sometimes viewed as a playmate. Still higher, however, is the vātsalya attitude, or looking upon God as one's child. It is a relationship intended to remove the association of power from our concept of God.

> To conceive God as mighty, majestic, and glorious, as the Lord of the universe, or as the God of gods, the lover says that he does not care. It is to avoid this association with God of the fear-creating sense of power that he worships God as his own child...This idea of loving God as a child comes into existence and grows naturally among those religious sects which believe in the incarnation of God.54

The highest relationship, however, is that of madhura (sweet), in which God is viewed as the husband and the bhakta as wife. Sometimes even the analogy of illicit and obstructed love is employed to characterize its intensity.

Parā bhakti is most commonly represented by Vivekananda as a triangle of three vital characteristics.[55] Its first feature is the absence of all bargaining. No real love, he points out, is possible in the expectation of some return. In parā bhakti, there is not even the hope for salvation. It is the ideal of love for love's sake; Īśvara is loved because He is lovable, and the bhakta cannot help loving. The second characteristic is the absence of all fear. God is not loved or worshipped from fear, because they are both incompatible. The worship of God through fear of punishment, says Vivekananda, is the crudest expression of love. God's role as rewarder or punisher is not important at this level of devotion.

Finally, the love of God is always the highest ideal. The most intense love is possible only when its object is our highest ideal.

Along with these three characteristics, parā bhakti is also distinguished by responses of reverence, pleasure and misery. Everything associated with the Beloved, such as temples, pilgrimage sites and teachers are revered. The bhakta's delight in God is as intense as the pleasure of the sensualist in objects of enjoyment. He is miserable because of having not attained the ideal of his love, and dissatisfied with anything which draws his attention away from God. Ultimately, his life is of value only because of this love. There are many very beautiful and inspiring passages in Vivekananda's description of parā-bhakti. The ideal is attained when the bhakta transcends the need for all symbol and forms, and when all thoughts and emotions effortlessly centre themselves on God. In and through his love for God as the universal, the bhakta comes to love everything in the universe.

> In this way everything becomes sacred to the Bhakta, because all things are His. All are His children, His body, His manifestation. How then may we hurt any one? With the love of God will come, as a sure effect, the love of everyone in the universe. The nearer we approach God, the more do we begin to see that all things are in Him. When the soul succeeds in appropriating the bliss of this supreme love, it also begins to see Him in everything.56

In this state of intense, all absorbing love, the bhakta is completely resigned to the will of God. The incomparable peace of this resignation is the result of welcoming all experiences, pleasurable and painful, as coming from his Beloved.

There are obviously few difficulties with Vivekananda's comprehensive account of the prerequisites and characteristics of bhaktiyoga. In this detailing, he acknowledges his dependence on Ramanuja and other bhakti writers.[57] Ramanuja, of course, fiercely challenged many of the conclusions of Advaita and his concepts of brahman, ātman and moksha differ sharply from both Shankara and Vivekananda. Vivekananda, however, presents bhaktiyoga as leading directly to the conclusions and goal of Advaita.

> Those who have faith in the Personal God have to undergo spiritual practices holding on to that idea. If there is sincerity, through that will come the awakening of the lion of Brahman within. The knowledge of Brahman is the one goal of all beings but the various ideas are the various paths to it.58

One imagines that by, "the awakening of the lion of Brahman within", Vivekananda really means the gain of the knowledge of brahman, for there is no question of an arousal of brahman. In our karmayoga analysis, however, we have remarked on the terminological impreciseness at the same point in his discussion, and the tendency to reformulate the fundamental problem from one of ignorance of an ever available brahman.

Vivekananda's entire presentation of bhaktiyoga is descriptive, and while claiming that the method leads directly to brahmajñāna, there is very little discussion of how this is brought about. To this effect, two suggestions emerge from his writings. The first is that the final removal of avidyā and the freedom of non-duality is effected, for the bhakta, by the grace of īśvara.

> That love of God grows and assumes a form which is called Para-Bhakti or supreme devotion. Forms vanish, rituals fly away, books are superseded; images, temples, churches, religions and sects, countries and nationalities - all these little limitations and bondages fall off by their own nature from him who knows this love of God. Nothing remains to bind him or fetter his freedom. A ship, all of a sudden, comes near a magnetic rock, and its iron bolts and bars are all attracted and drawn out, and the planks get loosened and freely float on the water. Divine grace thus loosens the binding bolts and bars of the soul, and it becomes free.59

In passages like these, however, we are not provided with any details about the nature of the freedom so gained, and they are contradicted by the view expressed elsewhere denying the dependence of salvation on grace.

> QUESTION: Can salvation (Mukti) be obtained without the grace of God?
>
> ANSWER: Salvation has nothing to do with God. Freedom already is.60

There are other passages in Vivekananda which suggest a natural progression to freedom through parā bhakti. We can do no better than cite one such example.

> We all have to begin as dualists in the religion of love. God is to us a separate Being, and we all feel ourselves to be separate beings also. Love then comes in the middle, and man begins to approach God, and God also comes nearer and nearer to man. Man takes up all the various relationships of life, as father, as mother, as son, as friend, as master, as lover, and projects them on his ideal of love, on his God. To him God exists as all these, and the last point of his progress is reached when he feels that he has become absolutely merged in the object of his worship. We all begin with love for ourselves, and the unfair claims of the little self make even love selfish. At last, however, comes the full blaze of light, in which this little self is seen to have become one with the Infinite. Man himself is transfigured in the presence of this Light of Love, and he realises at last the beautiful truth that Love, the Lover, and the Beloved are One.61

That the movement from the duality of bhaktiyoga to non-duality is a natural and inevitable progression is not

at all clearly demonstrated in these passages. In fact, these passages seem only to fall into the context of his general presupposition that all religious quests will eventually end in non-duality, and in the context of the progressive development of doctrine which he claims to be able to trace in the Vedas.[62] Unless this presupposition is accepted, then the inexorable movement from duality to non-duality is not clear from his bhaktiyoga discussion. The discovery of non-duality occurs from the stage of parā bhakti, but even at this level, from his own descriptions, there is a clear distinction between worshipper and worshipped. One cannot assume this discovery to be in terms of knowledge derived from the śruti, for, as in karmayoga, he stresses the lack of necessity for doctrines in parā bhakti. The transition therefore, without śabda-prāmana, from the love and worship of God, to a knowledge of the limitlessness and reality of one's own Self, remains open to question.

8.3 Jñānayoga

It may appear to be very surprising that of all the paths to moksha examined in the present chapter, Vivekananda offers the least details on jñānayoga. It is true that most of his lectures and writings elaborate Advaita theories about the nature of God, man and the universe, and could, in this sense, be said to be concerned with jñāna. He does not provide, however, any clear outline of the method of jñānayoga as a path to moksha. One suspects that the

difficulty here is that, even from Vivekananda's standpoint, jñāna is the goal for which all other paths are means. In proposing jñānayoga as a path among other direct paths, jñāna becomes a means to jñāna. If at the very inception one has the knowledge which is the object of the quest, then there seems to be no further need to search for that knowledge. In Shankara, this difficulty is obviated by the fact that knowledge gained from the śruti is both means and end. Shankara does not suggest that this knowledge must, in some way or other, be further applied or employed as a means of gaining the same knowledge. In Vivekananda's case, however, any knowledge derived from śruti inquiry is not final knowledge, and we have emphasized this contrast with Shankara. Final, liberating knowledge is only derived through the direct verification afforded by a special experience. Only in this sense does jñānayoga as a means to jñāna appear understandable. Even so, Vivekananda does not demonstrate how this initial, but inconclusive, knowledge is further applied to arrive at the same, but conclusive, knowledge.

In Vivekananda's writings, we are only given vague suggestions about what constitutes the distinctiveness and development of jñānayoga as a path among other paths. We can bring together the suggestions which find frequent mention. He presents jñānayoga as a method suitable only for the highest and most exceptional minds, the brave, strong and daring. It is the way of the minority. In contrast with other paths, it is most difficult, but also brings the quickest results.[63]

> The object of Jnana-Yoga is the same as that of Bhakti and Raja Yogas, but the method is different. This is the Yoga for the strong, for those who are neither mystical nor devotional, but rational.64

While selfless activity seems to be the chief distinctive feature of karmayoga, and loving worship of bhaktiyoga, Vivekananda presents "pure" reason and reliance on will as the singular characteristics of jñānayoga. He describes it as the rational and philosophical side of yoga.

> As the Bhakti-Yogi works his way to complete oneness with the Supreme through love and devotion, so the Jnana-Yogi forces his way to the realisation of God by the power of pure reason. He must be prepared to throw away all old idols, all old beliefs and superstitions, all desire for this world or another, and be determined only to find freedom. Without Jnana (knowledge) liberation cannot be ours.65

> The Jnani is a tremendous rationalist; he denies everything. He tells himself day and night, "There are no beliefs, no sacred words, no heaven, no hell, no creed, no church - there is only the Atman". When everything has been thrown away until what cannot be thrown away is reached, that is the Self. The Jnani takes nothing for granted; he analyses by pure reason and force of will, until he reaches Nirvana which is the extinction of all relativity.66

Occasionally, the path of jñānayoga is briefly alluded to as the negative way, "neti, neti" (not this, not this), but the exact nature of this negative reasoning is not developed.[67] In one place, it is described as a method of mind control or destruction, after which the real discloses itself.[68] Elsewhere, his description suggests that it is a denial of the non-Self and an assertion of the Self.[69] Among other characteristics of jñānayoga, Vivekananda twice describes it as "creedlessness". It is, according to him, the end to which all creeds should aspire, but it is above and beyond creeds.[70] Perhaps this statement has also to be seen in the light of Vivekananda's general low estimation of what he regards as doctrines.

The most common definition of jñānayoga in Vivekananda is his description of it as a method of pure reason and will. This definition, however, raises a number of problems within the context of his overall views. In describing jñānayoga to be of this nature, he does not indicate the source of the propositions upon which the jñānī exercises his reason, or whether these propositions are arrived at by reason itself. One is left wondering therefore, about whether śruti is to be understood as the source. If we assume that the original propositions are derived from śruti, then the utility or even the possibility of reasoning upon these statements seems to be undermined by some of Vivekananda's own contentions. We have already noted his view that śruti, as the product of an experience transcending reason, cannot be understood by reason. He has also argued that as a record of other people's experiences, śruti is of little benefit to the new aspirant. We shall also later see his claim that reason is only possible after experience and does not precede it.

It appears that in order to understand and evaluate Vivekananda's definition of jñānayoga as a path to knowledge through pure reason, we must take a broader look at the nature and functions of reason in his writings. We need also to look at specific examples of the kinds of reasoning he employs, and the claims which he makes for these.

In spite of his characterization of jñānayoga as a path of pure reason, Vivekananda, like Shankara, argues for the limited nature of reason. Its activity, he says,

is confined only to a narrow sphere, and beyond this it cannot reach. The most that reason can do in relation to ultimate questions is to adopt a position of agnosticism, for the answers to these questions lie outside of its field.[71] According to Vivekananda, the highest demonstration of reasoning in any branch of knowledge can only make a fact probable.

> The truths of religion, as God and Soul, cannot be perceived by the external senses. I cannot see God with my eyes, nor can I touch Him with my hands, and we also know that neither can we reason beyond the senses. Reason leaves us at a point quite indecisive; we may reason all our lives, as the world has been doing for thousands of years, and the result is that we find we are incompetent to prove or disprove the facts of religion.72

The chief limitation of reason therefore, as a faculty of deriving knowledge about God is its dependence on sense perception for its data. It can only run, he contends, within the bounds of perception for one only reasons upon data gathered through the senses. This constitutes its essential weakness, and binds it to the realms of time and space. He sees reason as classified and stored perception, preserved in memory.[73] As an intellectual process, it comes into being only after perception. This is true for both secular and spiritual knowledge.

> All argument and reasoning must be based upon certain perceptions. Without these, there cannot be any argument. Reasoning is the method of comparison between certain facts which we have already perceived. If these perceived facts are not there already, there cannot be any reasoning. If this is true of external phenomena, why should it not be so of the internal. The chemist takes certain chemicals and certain results are produced. This is a fact; you see it, sense it, and make that the basis on which to build all your chemical arguments. So with physicists, so with all

> other sciences. All knowledge must stand on perception of certain facts, and upon that we have to build our reasoning.74

This argument that reason becomes possible only subsequent to perception seems to undermine Vivkananda's own claim about jñānayoga as a path of reason. If reason is the chief tool which the aspirant has to employ from the inception, then it appears impossible to do so without a direct perception of spiritual truths. If, on the other hand, he directly perceives these truths, then, from the logic of Vivekananda's own arguments, reason is redundant.

Shankara shares the view that the primary limitation of inferential reasoning is its reliance on perception. In Shankara, however, the problem of the limitations of reason is overcome by the acceptance of śruti as a pramāna. Śruti is the only source of brahmajñāna. For Shankara, reason is the tool which we employ in understanding, interpreting and reconciling the words and sentences of the śruti. As a pramāṇa in the form of words, these must be accurately understood, for the meanings of words are not always obvious.[75]

The contrast in the role ascribed to reason by Shankara and Vivekananda is clearly highlighted in their respective interpretations of an important śruti text, Kaṭha Upanishad 1.2.7-9, which is concerned with the problems of expounding the ātman and the limits of reason.

> The wisdom that you have, O dearest one, which leads to sound knowledge when imparted only by someone else (other than the logician), is not to be attained through argumentation. You are, O compassionable one, endowed

> with true resolution. May our questioner be like you, O Naciketā.76

Vivekananda interprets this text as proscribing the application of all kinds of reasoning to the attainment of brahmajñāna.[77] Shankara, on the other hand, sees it as only forbidding independent reasoning, conjured by one's own intellect and having no basis in the śruti. He does not deny the futility of all reasoning.[78]

Unlike Shankara, Vivekananda posits the overcoming of the limitations of reason through a transcendental or superconscious state of mind. The knowledge which Shankara gains from the śruti is gained, for him, by an experience which goes beyond reason. It is a faculty, he claims, which all men possess.[79] Generally speaking, because of the overriding importance which Vivekananda places upon this special experience as a source of knowledge, he ascribes much less importance and esteem to reason than Shankara. He groups reason, along with theories, documents, doctrines, books and ceremonies, as an aid to religion. In relation to the superconscious experience, the role of reason is merely preparatory.[80] Vivekananda does not elaborate on this function, but it appears to be largely negative. It checks and prevents crude errors and superstition.

> The intellect is only the street-cleaner, cleansing the path for us, a secondary worker, the policeman; but the policeman is not a positive necessity for the workings of society. He is only to stop disturbances, to check wrong-doing, and that is all the work required of the intellect.81

In the light of Vivekananda's argument that reason cannot operate before perception, it is not clear how it can

accomplish even this negative role. There is no clear indication of the nature and source of the information upon which the aspirant exercises his reason, and no suggestion of the principles which should guide reason in this pre-perception stage.

Our attempt to study the wider significance of reason in Vivekananda seems therefore, to question and raise several unresolved issues about his definition of jñānayoga as the method of pure reason. These doubts are also supported by a consideration of specific examples of his own reasoning. The nature of his reasoning can be studied in what is, perhaps, one of his most interesting lectures, "Reason and Religion".[82] Religions, argues Vivekananda, have very often assumed the superiority of their claims over the findings of secular sciences, and refused to be justified by the latter. The unfortunate result of this has been a perpetual struggle between religion and secular knowledge, with the claims of the former being gradually eroded. If religion is to survive, there is a necessity, according to Vivekananda, to justify itself in the light of rational investigation and the findings of secular knowledge.

> Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of Religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of the opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific - as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions

> of physics or chemistry - but will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.83

Vivekananda then proceeds to enumerate two principles of reasoning or knowledge which, he claims, conclusively establish certain Advaita propositions to be scientifically valid. The first principle of reasoning is that movement in knowledge is from the particular to the general, and from the general to the more general until the universal is reached. He sees the notion of law or species of beings as applications of this principle of generalization.[84] The second principle of reasoning is that the explanation of a thing must come from the inside and not from the outside.

> This tendency you will find throughout modern thought; in one word, what is meant by science is that the explanation of things are in their own nature, and that no external beings or existences are required to explain what is going on in the universe.85

Vivekananda sees the concept of evolution as a demonstration of this principle. He understands evolution to signify the reproduction of the cause in the effect, or the full presence of the potentialities of the **cause** in the **effect**. He also sees the concept of the personal extra-cosmic deity as creator of the universe, as having failed to satisfy this scientific demand for an internal explanation. Vivekananda sees the brahman concept of Advaita as satisfying both of these scientific principles.

> We have to come to an ultimate generalisation, which not only will be the most universal of all generalisations, but out of which everything else must come. It will be of the same nature as the lowest effect; the cause, the highest, the ultimate, the primal cause, must

> be the same as the lowest and most distant of its effects, a series of evolutions. The Brahman of the Vedanta fulfils that condition, because Brahman is the last generalisation to which we can come. It has no attributes but is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss - Absolute. Existence, we have seen, is the very ultimate generalisation which the human mind can come to.86

Brahman also satisfies the need for an internal explanation, for It has nothing outside of Itself. It is identical with the universe, and the latter could therefore, be described as self-creating, manifesting and dissolving. As identical with brahman, the universe is its own explanation. For purposes of clarification, it should be stated that brahman is not identical with the universe in the sense of having undergone a real transformation to become the universe. The universe is only an appearance in brahman, brought about by māyā. Māyā is identical with brahman, and cannot be defined as either real or unreal. Brahman's nature is never lost, and It is not limited by the appearance of the universe.

In order to evaluate the achievements of these kinds of arguments in Vivekananda, it is better, at this point in our discussion, to view them in the much wider context of his general attempt to present Advaita as scientific. Karma and bhakti yoga are described respectively as the science of work and love.[87] It is obvious that in drawing this parallel, Vivekananda was working with a certain concept of science. This attempt to harmonize science and religion is not, by any means, original to Vivekananda, but was an important strand of thought in the Brahmo Samaj movement, particularly in its early phases, in thinkers like Akshaykumar Dutt, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and

Brajendranath Seal.[88] To found and justify their religion upon rational and scientific grounds was fundamental to their approach. Religion and science were not seen as incompatible, but as two sides of the same quest for truth, and the "science of religion" was an expression often used in their writings. As one who moved in the milieu of the Brahmo Samaj during the earlier years of his life, Vivekananda was undoubtedly influenced by this line of thinking and many of these ideas are later echoed by him.

The difficulty of arriving at the root of his concept of science is that he never clearly formulated it in any particular lecture or writing. Certain general ideas, however, find repeated mention, and these serve as the clue to the scientific concept he was using to draw a parallel with religion. The most important idea which, for him, linked science and religion was the idea of unity. The aim and end of the scientific method, according to Vivekananda, was the finding of unity, the one out of which the manifold is being manifested. As soon as any science found such a unity, it would come to an end, for it would have reached the highest point beyond which it cannot proceed.[89] He represented science as having already discovered a physical oneness of the universe, in telling us that everything is a manifestation of energy, the sum total of all that exists. The difference between Advaita and science, he says, is that the former had discovered this oneness much earlier by its search into internal nature, while the latter had discovered it through investigating the external. The corollary, of course, is that the discovery

of this common goal makes Advaita scientific.

> Physics would stop when it would be able to fulfil its services in discovering one energy of which all the others are but manifestations, and the science of religion become perfect when it would discover Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world. One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus is it, through multiplicity and duality, that the ultimate unity is reached. Religion can go no farther. This is the goal of all science.90

The issue for query here is whether the aim and method of science can be defined by the search for unity. If, for the sake of argument, one were to accept this as being so, the question as to whether a religion that proposes a goal of oneness is justified in being described as scientific, still remains open. The scientist, if drawn into this controversy, will most certainly contend that his discipline cannot only be defined by its general aim, even provided that this could be agreed upon. There is the vital question of its methodology, the most important aspect of which is its agreed means and standards of verification.

Although Vivekananda is not explicit on this point, it seems that he uses the concept of science to refer to any rational system which proposes a goal and outlines a "practical" method for its accomplishment. "Scientific" is equated, by him, with that which is internally consistent and practical. It appears that he also describes the four yogas as being scientific in this sense. This strikes one, however, as a loose application of the term. It is perhaps more accurate and meaningful to describe such

a system as rational, rather than scientific. We have already noted his identification of the method of generalization and the search for an internal explanation as other features of science.

The search for unity, the movement from the particular to the general, and the attempt to explain all phenomena by reference to their own natures are perhaps broad features of the scientific method, although science does not necessarily proceed on the assumption of the existence of any final unity. It is another matter, however, to describe as scientific any system which proposes unity as the ultimate reality, which proceeds from the particular to the general, and which offers an internal explanation.[91] In spite of Vivekananda's attempt to show that the method of generalization and the criterion of an internal explanation renders Advaita scientific, it is obvious that this aim is not achieved. While Advaita might proceed on the method of moving from the particular to the general, and brahman as a universal encompasses everything, these features do not make it scientific in the same sense as other conclusions of the physical sciences. This is also true for the argument that the universe must be explained with reference to its own internal nature. These kinds of reasoning perhaps demonstrate Advaita to be in line with certain general trends in scientific thinking, but they are not independently conclusive arguments. They add a certain plausibility to the propositions of Advaita and reveal them as not being inconsistent with some forms of scientific thinking, but one cannot contend that

these explanations scientifically demonstrate the validity of Advaita. In this sense, Vivekananda's reasoning is not different in its achievement from what Shankara conceives to be the possibility of reason in relation to śruti. This conclusion raises further questions about his definition of jñānayoga as a method of pure reason, and his belief that religion must be fully justified by the standpoint of reason.[92]

Our conclusion can be further demonstrated by looking at one more example of his reasoning. One of his favourite and most frequently employed forms of reasoning is to draw parallels between the microcosm and macrocosm.[93] In observing the microcosm, Vivekananda says, the pattern is that everything begins from certain seed-like or fine forms, and then becomes grosser and grosser. They develop in this way for some time, before subsiding and reverting back to their fine forms. The manifest or gross is the effect and the finer form the cause, but the effect is simply a reproduction of the cause in a different form. The effect is not different from the cause. His second conclusion is that all forms in the microcosm are cyclically rising and falling. Thirdly, the grosser forms do not immediately emerge from the finer ones. Their emergence is preceded by a period of unmanifest activity. Finally, we never observe anything in the microcosm being produced out of nothing. Vivekananda extends these conclusions to the nature of the macrocosm. The universe, as a whole, has its cause in brahman, from which, as an effect, it is not different. It has also emerged out of a finer

form to which it will again revert, and this process is a cyclical one. Like the other arguments we have considered, this is also not independently conclusive. While certain generalizations can be made from observation of the microcosm, one cannot infallibly infer from these about the nature of the macrocosm. The uniformity of nature, as an assumption, may not have been refuted, but it is only an assumption nevertheless. This argument, however, can add some credence to the cosmological views of Advaita.

Close scrutiny of Vivekananda's arguments show that they are all constructed on implicit premises from the śruti. He does not directly acknowledge this, and in the manner in which his arguments are presented, the śruti-derived propositions are not always obvious. We can illustrate this by citing an interesting example from his writing.

> The Atman is the only existence in the human body which is not material. Because it is immaterial, it cannot be a compound, and because it is not a compound, it does not obey the law of cause and effect, and so it is immortal. That which is immortal can have no beginning because everything with a beginning must have an end. It also follows that it must be formless; there cannot be any form without matter...But the Self having no form, cannot be bound by the law of beginning and end. It is existing from infinite time; just as time is eternal, so is the Self of man eternal. Secondly, it must be all-pervading. It is only form that is conditioned and limited by space; that which is formless cannot be confined in space. So according to Advaita Vedanta, the Self, the Atman, in you, in me, in everyone, is omnipresent.94

This excerpt is a splendid example of a logically formulated argument, constructed from successive inferences. Its movement is swift and complex, but it is all composed on the premise of the immateriality of the ātman. The validity of all subsequent inferences depend on this.

This premise, however, is not arrived at through any kind of inference, and we must conclude therefore, that its origin is in the śruti.

Vivekananda's writings reveal that his principal concern in elaborating the four yogas as direct and independent means to moksha was to highlight what he saw as the liberal and universal claims of Vedānta. He wished to contrast this with the exclusivism, particularly of Christianity, which proclaimed only one way to freedom. It is not within the scope of our discussion to present a detailed analysis of his theories on religious diversity, but it is important to understand his motivation in arguing for different ways to moksha. He saw religious strife as the result of the adoption by each religion of a narrow self-righteous position. It was a special concern of his, and his first speech before the Parliament of Religions in 1893 was on the theme of sectarianism and bigotry. Vivekananda's own solution was to propose the concept of a universal religion. By universal religion he does not mean religious uniformity or the triumph of one particular tradition over all others. He saw certain failure in such attempts.[95] Universal religion, for him, seems synonymous with the absence of exclusiveness. In this connection, he distinguishes between the terms religion and sect. The former is indicative of an all embracing attitude, whereas the latter is exclusive. The same distinction he makes between religion and creed, and refuses to use the former appellation to designate Christianity because of its antagonistic features.[96]

By universal religion, Vivekananda means, more than anything else, a particular outlook on religious diversity. A number of attitudes constitute this outlook. The natural necessity of variation must be recognized and accepted.

> Just as we have recognised unity by our very nature, so we must also recognise variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints and yet be the same thing.97

In spite of this diversity of expression, religions are to be seen as manifestations of a common struggle towards God, and each should strive to assimilate the spirit of others while preserving its own individuality.

In his formulation of the concept of universal religion, two Hindu ideas have an extended function in the interpretation of diversity and the development of a spirit of understanding. The first of these is the idea of the avatāra or the incarnation of God in the human world. The application of the idea in this context would result in the recognition of the falsity of the assertion that any single prophet is alone true. He saw each religious founder as representing and emphasizing a great ideal. The second idea centres around the principle of the ishta-deva, or the freedom to choose a concept or representation of God and a means of worship consistent with one's own needs and preferences. There is no necessity to impose one's preferences on others.

It is in the light of his ideal of universal religion and what he considered to be its central characteristics that one must look at Vivekananda's argument for Advaita as fulfilling this ideal. There are several grounds

on which he sought to justify this role. We have already noted his argument that whereas all other traditions are based on the life of a founder and therefore, susceptible to any doubts of historicity, Vedānta is founded on impersonal principles. Within this impersonal framework, however, it has, in the ideas of avatāra and ishta, a wide scope for the play of personalities. He has argued that it is easier to share a common vision on principles rather than on personalities. Among other characteristics, he sees the idea of tolerance as being well rooted, and the harmony of its propositions with the findings of secular knowledge. He also considers the spiritual oneness of the universe advocated in Advaita as a better foundation for ethics than personal authority. It is in this context that he proposes the methods of karma, bhakti, jñāna and rājayoga, as being wide enough to embrace the active, emotional, philosophical and mystical temperaments. He sees these four paths within a single tradition as overcoming the one-sided nature of other religions.

In the present chapter, however, we have tried to show that he does not conclusively demonstrate karma and bhaktiyoga, as formulated by him, to be direct and independent paths to moksha. In respect of these two methods, our principal line of argument has been that in the context of the Advaita definition of avidyā and the nature of bondage, as well as its conception of moksha, karma and bhaktiyoga raise and leave unanswered many questions. There is no clear formulation of the nature of jñānayoga as a distinct method, and his characterization

of it as a method of pure reason cannot be sustained in the light of a wider examination of the functions which he assigns to reason. In fact, his own claim for these yogas to be independent paths to brahmajñāna appears to break down when, as we shall see in the next chapter, he argues that rājayoga is the only means through which one can gain the unique experience which directly validates religious truth. In the light of this claim, all other methods appear preparatory for rājayoga, rather than as being the self-sufficient means which he presents them to be. Throughout his discussion of karma and bhaktiyoga, there is the hint or suggestion of these methods suddenly culminating in an experience of some kind, which, by itself, eliminates avidyā. It is to a consideration of his innumerable references to this experience, that we must now turn our attention.

CHAPTER 9

THE MEANING AND AUTHORITATIVENESS OF *ANUBHAVA* IN VIVEKANANDA

In Chapter 7, we sought to present Vivekananda's understanding of the nature, role and authority of the *Vedas*, and to deduce relevant contrasts with Shankara. It clearly emerged that Vivekananda does not posit the knowledge derived from the *Upanishads* as having any immediate or self-sufficient validity for the aspirant. At best, such knowledge only stands as a possibility, testifying to the spiritual discoveries of others, and the methods by which these have been made. To be free from all doubts and incontestable, the declarations of the *Upanishads*, according to Vivekananda, must be personally verified by each individual through some sort of direct perception of their claims. It is only knowledge derived through this direct apprehension that he considers to be ultimately valid and capable of liberating from *avidyā*. He seems to think that knowledge obtained from any other source is second-hand, and will always lack certitude and conviction. In our consideration of the methods of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* in Chapter 8, we repeatedly encountered suggestions of the progression to a final experience in which *brahmajñāna* spontaneously manifests, and *avidyā*

is overcome. In this connection, we pointed to a certain obscurity in Vivekananda's discussion, and to difficulties in reconciling the nature of moksha with the peculiarities and assumptions of the methods suggested. In the present chapter, we seek to draw together and evaluate the many statements of Vivekananda on the nature of the experience, which, he asserts, leads to valid knowledge of brahman.

9.1 The Rationale and Significance of Anubhava

One cannot overestimate the importance of the experience of direct perception in Vivekananda's philosophy of religion. It is this which he signifies by the often used expression "realisation", and which may, with good reason, be said to constitute the central and most outstanding feature of his religious thought. It is an idea which he unfailingly labours in almost every one of his lectures. In his first major address at the Parliament of Religions in 1893, for example, he presented this idea as, "the very centre, the vital conception of Hinduism".

> The Hindu does not want to live upon words and theories. If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous existence, he wants to come face to face with them. If there is a soul in him which is not matter, if there is an all-merciful Soul, he will go to Him direct. He must see Him, and that alone can destroy all doubts. So the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God, is: "I have seen the soul; I have seen God". And that is the only condition of perfection. The Hindu religion does not consist

> in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realising - not in believing, but in being and becoming.1

In his quest for the common bases of the diverse religious traditions within the wide embrace of the Hindu fold, he again and again presented this idea of religion as realization or direct perception, as belonging to everyone of them.

> The mighty word that came out from the sky of spirituality in India was Anubhuti, realisation, and ours are the only books which declare again and again; "The Lord is to be seen". Bold, brave words indeed, but true to their very core; every sound, every vibration is true. Religion is to be realised, not only heard; it is not in learning some doctrine like a parrot. Neither is it mere intellectual assent - that is nothing; but it must come into us. Ay, and therefore the greatest proof that we have of the existence of a God is not because our reason says so, but because God has been seen by the ancients as well as by the moderns.2

Why does realization or the possibility of a direct perception of religious claims occupy such an unmistakably prominent focus in Vivekananda's thought? What was his primary interest in arguing for its necessity and reality? It emerges from his lectures and writings that he was anxious to find an essential point of reference or appeal, by virtue of which the profound issues and claims of religion could be placed on the level of fact. He was concerned that all of the crucial and significant issues of religion, such as the existence and nature of God and the soul, could never be finally and satisfactorily established by any form of argument or process of reasoning.[3] In Chapter 7, we have sufficiently emphasized his disdain for "theoretical" religion, doctrine and dogma. Vivekananda wanted to demonstrate that religious propositions can,

and must be certified by a process of verification not unlike that employed by the physical sciences.[4]

All knowledge, contends Vivekananda, is based upon and derived from experience.[5] Inferential knowledge, for example, has its basis in sense experience. The appeal of the physical sciences, according to Vivekananda, lies in the fact that claims can be referred to particular experiences of all human beings.

> The scientist does not tell you to believe in anything, but he has certain results which come from his own experiences, and reasoning on them when he asks us to believe in his conclusions, he appeals to some universal experience of humanity. In every exact science there is a basis which is common to all humanity, so that we can at once see the truth or fallacy of the conclusions drawn therefrom.6

The problem of religion, argues Vivekananda, is that it is generally presented as founded upon faith and belief, and lacking central and universal experiences by reference to which its claims could be verified. He strongly denies this, and affirms that religious beliefs are also derived from certain generic experiences. All religions, according to Vivekananda, make the claim that its truths originate from the experiences of certain persons.

> The Christian asks you to believe in his religion, to believe in Christ and to believe in him as the incarnation of God, to believe in a God, in a soul, and in a better state of that soul. If I ask him for reason, he says he believes in them. But if you go to the fountain-head of Christianity, you will find that it is based upon experience. Christ said that he saw God; the disciples said they felt God; and so forth. Similarly, in Buddhism, it is Buddha's experience. He experienced certain truths, saw them, came in contact with them, and preached them to the world...Thus it is clear that all the religions of the world have been built upon that one universal

> and adamantine foundation of all our knowledge - direct experience.7

The unfortunate fact, argues Vivekananda, is the claim in the present time that these experiences were unique to certain people, and are no longer possible, so that religious conviction must now be founded on faith. His strong contention is that any experience in a particular branch of knowledge must be repeatable.

Rājayoga is the method proposed by Vivekananda for enabling us to attain direct perception of religious truths. In fact, he claims that this is the method advanced by all schools of Indian philosophy for gaining moksha.[8] In his discussion of rājayoga, we also find the declaration that it is "as much a science as any in the world", with its own unique methods for producing results when properly applied. Like his claim for the method of karmayoga, he emphasizes that no faith or belief is necessary.[9] This, one assumes, is linked to his urge to demonstrate this method to be scientific. We must now concern ourselves with the outline and steps of rājayoga as presented by Vivekananda.

9.2 The Method of Rājayoga

Rājayoga, based primarily on the Yoga-sūtras of Patañjali, comprises eight disciplines. We shall briefly look at how Vivekananda understands each of these procedures.

The first steps are the ethical and moral disciplines of yama and niyama. Yama incorporates non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and the non-receiving of gifts. Niyama comprises cleanliness,contentment, austerity, study and self-surrender to God. These disciplines, according to Vivekananda, are the very basis of the successful practice of Yoga.[10] The second step is āsana (posture). Vivekananda explains that a comfortable posture is necessary for the daily execution of physical and mental exercises. The posture which is easiest should be chosen, as long as the spinal column is kept erect.

The practice of prāṇāyāma follows facility in āsana. It is one of the procedures of rājayoga for which a considerable discussion occurs in Vivekananda. He is most concerned to refute the popular view that prāṇāyāma is essentially a routine aimed at the control of breathing. The universe, according to Vivekananda, is composed of two basic materials, ākāśā and prāṇa. Ākāśā is the original substance out of which everything possessing form or produced as a result of combination is evolved. It is, in other words, conceived by Vivekananda as the basic subtle stuff of the universe. Prāṇa on the other hand, is the power by which ākāśā is manufactured into a diversity of forms. Out of prāṇa emerges everything called force or energy, and among its manifestations are motion, gravitation and magnetism.[11] Vivekananda explains therefore, that prāṇāyāma is really the knowledge and control of prāṇa. In the human body, adds Vivekananda, the most ostensible demonstration of the activity of prāṇa is the rhythmic motion of the lungs in breathing.

Prāṇa is responsible for this movement, and not vice-versa. Prāṇāyāma is a vast attempt, through the mastery of the breathing process, to gain control of all conscious and unconscious activity in the body.[12]

The next three processes in rājayoga are the largely mental disciplines of pratyāhāra, dhāraṇa and dhyāna. Pratyāhāra is the continuous process of restraining and controlling the mind by curbing its attachment to the internal and external organs of perception . Pratyāhāra is followed by dhāraṇa, the practice of focusing the mind's attention on certain fixed points. One may centre attention, for example, exclusively on some parts of the body.[13] Dhyāna follows directly from this exercise.

> When the mind has been trained to remain fixed on a certain internal or external location, there comes to it the power of flowing in an unbroken current, as it were, towards that point. This state is called Dhyana.14

It is through the steady practice of dhyāna that the aspirant eventually attains to samādhi, the culmination of all the disciplines of rājayoga. The entire procedure, claims Vivekananda, is designed to bring us scientifically to this all-important state.

> From the lowest animal to the highest angel, some time or other, each one will have to come to that state, and then, and then alone, will real religion begin for him. Until then we only struggle towards that stage. There is no difference now between us and those who have no religion, because we have no experience. What is concentration good for, save to bring us to this experience? Each one of the steps to attain Samadhi has been reasoned out, properly adjusted, scientifically organised, and when faithfully practised, will surely lead us to the desired end. Then will all sorrows cease, all miseries vanish; the seeds for actions will be burnt, and the soul will be free for ever.15

Samādhi is the result, attests Vivekananda, of the awakening of the kuṇḍalinī.[16] This is the single way, he says, of attaining spiritual knowledge through direct perception. He sees all religious disciplines as leading consciously or unconsciously to this end, and proclaims rājayoga as, "the science of religion, the rationale of all worship, all prayers, forms, ceremonies, and miracles".

> Thus the rousing of the Kundalini is the one and only way to attaining Divine Wisdom, superconscious perception, realisation of the spirit. The rousing may come in various ways, through love for God, through the mercy of perfected sages, or through the power of the analytic will of the philosopher.17

Although the concept of the samādhi-experience is derived by Vivekananda from the Yoga-sūtras of Patañjali, Patañjali does not refer to the kuṇḍalinī. The idea of the kuṇḍalinī appears to have been unknown to him, and belongs to the schools of Tantra.[18]

Samādhi occupies, for Vivekananda, the same function and status as a source of knowledge for brahmajñāna, which Shankara ascribes to the Vedas as śabda-pramāṇa. In fact, he presents samādhi as the only satisfactory source of brahmajñāna. It is important therefore, that we seek to understand the exact manner in which he sees knowledge as occurring in this state.

9.3 The Nature of Samādhi as a Source of Knowledge

(I). Samādhi as Highest Level of Mental Activity

Vivekananda very often describes the nature of samādhi by distinguishing three gradations of mental activity. The lowest of these is the level of instinctive behaviour, most highly developed among animals. Here, according to Vivekananda, thought is largely unconscious, and actions are unaccompanied by any feelings of egoism or self-awareness. Instinctive activity includes all reflex actions. Although he describes instinct as the lowest instrument of knowledge, he speaks of it as being almost infallible. The impulse of an animal rarely fails.[19] The problem with instinct, however, says Vivekananda, is the limited sphere of knowledge and activity within which it operates. Its responses are mechanical and incapable of dealing readily with anything new or uncharted.

Reason is a more highly developed instrument of knowledge than instinct. It is conscious mental activity, most efficient in man, and accompanied by a sense of egoism and self-awareness.[20] It is the level of thought and judgement, gathering facts and generalizing. Even though its sphere of operation, says Vivekananda, is much wider than the confines of instinct, it is nevertheless very limited.[21] In contrast with the accuracy of instinct, Vivekananda describes reason as being slower and more liable to error.

Higher than unconscious instinct and conscious reason

is the superconscious state of mind or samādhi. It is described by Vivekananda as the most elevated plane on which the mind can function, and here it completely transcends the limits of reason and instinct and apprehends facts inaccessible to these. He characterizes the superconscious as being infallible and far more unlimited in its scope than reason. The superconscious, according to Vivekananda, shares with instinct the quality of being free from the sense of egoism, but the two levels are completely opposed. He admits the danger and difficulty of mistaking instinct for inspiration, and suggests a set of criteria by which these two could be distinguished. Using sleep as an example of unconscious mental activity, he points out the primary difference from samādhi.

> When a man goes into deep sleep, he enters a plane beneath consciousness. He works the body all the time, he breathes, he moves the body, perhaps, in his sleep, without any accompanying feeling of ego; he is unconscious, and when he returns from his sleep, he is the same man who went into it. The sum total of the knowledge which he had before he went into the sleep remains the same; it does not increase at all. No enlightenment comes. But when a man goes into Samadhi, if he goes into it a fool, he comes out a sage.22

The second norm for distinguishing the superconscious from instinct, according to Vivekananda, is that the former never contradicts reason. If it ever does, he argues, it cannot be the superconscious, and reason has to be the basis for making this distinction. The explanation, adds Vivekananda, lies in the fact that these three states progressively evolve.

> There are not three minds in one man, but one state of it develops into the others. Instinct develops

> into reason, and reason into the transcendental consciousness; therefore, not one of these states contradicts the others. Real inspiration never contradicts reason, but fulfils it.23

The third standard, proposed by Vivekananda, has to do with the integrity of the individual who claims to be inspired. Such a person should be seen to be perfectly unselfish, not motivated by any desire for fame or material gain, and the content of his experience should be for the good of all. It is Vivekananda's view that the state of superconsciousness, though attained by few, is possible for all.

(II). Samādhi as Method of Concentration

As a means of knowing the Self, samādhi is usually presented by Vivekananda as a method of concentration or meditation. This is again clearly associated with his concern to present rājayoga as a scientific method of gaining brahmajñāna.

To do this, Vivekananda speaks in universal terms about the acquisition of different kinds of knowledge. The process of acquiring knowledge, he contends, begins with the gathering of facts through observation. On the basis of these facts we then generalize and deduce conclusions.[24] Vivekananda emphasizes observation or concentration as the primary and paramount act in the operation of acquiring any knowledge. In the physical

sciences, it is a question of concentrating the mind on external phenomena.

> There is only one method by which to attain this knowledge, that which is called concentration. The chemist in his laboratory concentrates all the energies of his mind into one focus, and throws them upon the materials he is analysing, and so finds out their secrets. The astronomer concentrates all the energies of his mind and projects them through his telescope upon the skies; and the stars, the sun, and the moon, give up their secrets to him.25

No real science, continues Vivekananda, is possible without this power of concentration, and it is similarly presented by him as the key to the knowledge of the essential nature of man. In this case, however, the observation is internal.

> The powers of the mind should be concentrated and turned back upon itself, and as the darkest places reveal their secrets before the penetrating rays of the sun, so will this concentrated mind penetrate its own innermost secrets. Thus will we come to the basis of belief, the real genuine religion. We will perceive for ourselves whether we have souls, whether life is of five minutes or of eternity, whether there is a God in the universe or none. It will be all revealed to us.26

Internal observation, admits Vivekananda, is not as easily attained as the observation of external nature in science, but he sees in rājayoga a method of developing this capacity.[27] The common quality, identified by Vivekananda, of deriving knowledge through observation is one of the principal arguments used by him in seeking to show rājayoga to be scientific. Because it derives its facts simply by observing, says Vivekananda, there is no necessity for reliance on faith or blind belief.[28]

The uniqueness and chief characteristic of rājayoga

as a method of procuring knowledge through observation is that the object of study as well as the instrument is the mind.[29] It is the study of the contents of the mind which reveals to us our true natures. Sometimes, without distinguishing between mind and soul, Vivekananda speaks of the necessity for analyzing or anatomizing, by observation, the nature of the soul. Through this method alone, he attests, does one discover its immortality and omnipresence.[30]

Vivekananda's conception of rājayoga as a mode of acquiring knowledge through concentration of the mind has to be seen in the context of his repeated assertion that all knowledge, secular or spiritual, is within. No knowledge, he contests, ever comes from outside. Using the terms mind and soul interchangeably, he describes both as repositories of infinite knowledge.[31] Past, present and future knowledge, he says, is inherent in man, and pre-existing through eternity. The entire process of knowing, according to Vivekananda, is more accurately described as one of discovery or unveiling, for knowledge is never really created.

> We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind.32

Vivekananda describes the external world as simply the suggestion or stimulus which drives one to study the contents of his own mind. He affirms that knowledge

is never to be found in insentient matter. Vivekananda, however, still justifies the necessity for the spiritual teacher by proposing a similar argument. While never compromising his stand that every kind of knowledge is inherent, he contends that this inborn knowledge can only be called out or made manifest by another knowledge.

> Dead, insentient matter never calls out knowledge, it is the action of knowledge that brings out knowledge. Knowing beings must be with us to call forth what is in us, so that these teachers were always necessary. The world was never without them, and no knowledge can come without them.33

In all of these discussions, his emphasis is upon the teacher within who really teaches, and without whom all teachers are useless. Vivekananda claims the support of the Bhagavadgītā for this view, and speaks of the imperative for getting the knowledge contained in the Upanishads from within oneself.[34] In fact, Vivekananda presents this argument about the innate nature of all knowledge as a doctrine of Vedānta, and describes all spiritual disciplines, including karmayoga, bhaktiyoga and jñānayoga, as being meant only for its awakening.[35]

Through samādhi, contends Vivekananda, is this intrinsic knowledge directly gained. He goes to the extent of claiming that samādhi is the means of spiritual knowledge in every religious tradition. In all cases, according to Vivekananda, where religious teachers claimed to have received knowledge "from beyond", the source has always within themselves. Knowledge is often described as coming from the outside because individuals can stumble upon the samādhi state without understanding its nature.[36]

The accidental discovery of sāmadhi, and its interpretation according to different levels of belief and education is Vivekananda's explanation for the quaint mixture of truth and superstition in religion.[37]

(III). Sāmadhi as Death of the Mind and Absence of Duality

In our study, so far, of Vivekananda's description of the nature of sāmadhi as a source of knowledge, the impression is that he identifies the state with a particular level of mental activity. Even in what he defines as the superconscious condition, the mind still appears to be operative. This description, however, seems to be modified, if not contradicted, by several passages in which he repeatedly affirms that sāmadhi is consequent upon the death of the mind, and that it is characterized by a total absence of all mental functions. There is a constant tension in Vivekananda's writings between his portrayal of samādhi as a state in which the mind still obtains, and one in which it ceases to exist.

Vivekananda describes the goal of rājayoga as the total supression of all thought forms in the mind. He speaks of the necessity to curb each thought as it enters into the mind, making the mind a vacuum.[38] A disciple is advised by him to "kill the mind".[39] He repeatedly contends that the knowledge of the ātman naturally and spontaneously

follows the extinction of the mind. In fact, he presents atmajñāna as being dependent on this extinction.

> Yoga is the science by which we stop Chitta from assuming, or becoming transformed into, several faculties. As the reflection of the moon on the sea is broken or blurred by the waves, so is the reflection of the Atman, the true Self, broken by the mental waves. Only when the sea is stilled to mirror-like calmness can the reflection of the moon be seen, and only when the "mind-stuff", the Chitta is controlled to absolute calmness is the Self to be recognised. 40
>
> The mind has to be divested of all modifications (Vrittis) and reconverted into a transparent lake, so that there remains not a single wave of modification in it. Then will Brahman manifest Itself. 41

There are several occasions on which Vivekananda enthusiastically professed that even a momentary cessation of the mind leads to the full knowledge of the Self.[42]

There are not many descriptions in Vivekananda's writings of the actual state of samādhi. He describes it as being "sensationless", and characterized by the cessation of all mental modifications.[43] All duality disappears and the Knower and known become one.[44] We are afforded, however, two personal accounts of the samādhi state by Vivekananda, both strikingly similar. On the basis of Vivekananda's own discussions, we can consider the first account, where even his ego-sense disappeared, to be truer to the samādhi ideal. The confession of his inability to recollect anything in the absence of his ego consciousness is significant.

> One day in the temple-garden at Dakshineswar Shri Ramakrishna touched me over the heart, and first of all I began to see that the houses - rooms, doors, windows, verandahs - the trees, the sun, the moon - all were flying off, shattering to pieces as it

were - reduced to atoms and molecules - and ultimately became merged in the Akasha. Gradually again, the Akasha also vanished, and after that, my consciousness of the ego with it; what happened next I do not recollect. 45

(IV). Samādhi as Direct Perception or Objective Knowledge

The analogy almost invariably used by Vivekananda to describe the gain of ultimate knowledge in samādhi is pratyaksha (direct perception). He argues throughout for the possibility of a direct perception of religious truths. He fervently asserts that this alone can be convincing and satisfactory proof of the verity of religious claims.[46] This direct perception is always particularly distinguished by him from intellectual assent or dissent, and belief in doctrines. He is derisive towards the latter kind of religious commitment, classifying it as not being different from atheism. The goal is always affirmed to be direct perception, which alone constitutes real knowledge. This perception is, of course, not described by him to be the same as ordinary sense perception. He is clear that normal sense perception cannot apprehend religious truth. What is required is superconscious or "superfine" perception. This similarity lies in what he sees as the immediate verification which perception of both kinds afford.

> What is the proof of God? Direct perception Pratyaksha. The proof of this wall is that I perceive it. God

has been perceived that way by thousands before, and will be perceived by all who want to perceive Him. But this perception is no sense-perception at all; it is supersensuous, superconscious, and all this training is needed to take us beyond the senses. 47

Facts have to be perceived, and we have to perceive religion to demonstrate it to ourselves. We have to sense God to be convinced that there is a God. We must sense the facts of religion to know that they are facts. Nothing else, and no amount of reasoning, but our own perception can make these things real to us, can make my belief firm as a rock. That is my idea, and that is the Indian idea. 48

Religion is based upon sense contact, upon seeing, the only basis of knowledge. What comes in contact with the superconscious mind is fact. Aptas are those who have "sensed" religion. 49

The notion of realization, which we have noted to be a prominent feature of Vivekananda's thought, is equivalent to this direct perception. He makes even the proof of the very existence of the ātman dependent on perception.[50]

The possibility of coming into direct contact with the facts of religion is seen by him as putting the basis of verifying religious truth on the same level with science.[51]

This direct encounter occurs in the state of samādhi.

The highest grade of Samadhi is when we see the real thing, when we see the material out of which the whole of these grades of beings are composed, and that one lump of clay being known, we know all the clay in the universe. 52

He makes the same point with reference to the movement of the kuṇḍalinī.

It is supersensuous perception. And when it reaches the metropolis of all sensations, the brain, the whole brain, as it were, reacts, and the result is a blaze of illumination, the perception of the Self.53

The image of a flash or "blaze of illumination" is quite frequently employed by Vivekananda to describe the gain of knowledge in samādhi. He describes inspiration as the process of gaining knowledge "by flashes".[54]

Purification and preparation through Yoga and meditation make clearer the "flashes or realization".[55] The conception of monism "flashes" into the human soul, and on one occasion he describes as "the full blaze of light", the moment in which "this little Self is seen to have become one with the Infinite".[56]

Although it has been alluded to in our discussion, it is important to specifically emphasize the self-valid status which Vivekananda ascribes to knowledge gained through this process of direct perception. His disdain for dogma, doctrine, theory, books and intellectual assent and dissent is directly related to his view of the self-valid nature of knowledge gained through realization. Throughout his writings, he upholds the supreme value of realization in contrast with all of these.

> Talking is one thing, and realising is another. Philosophies, and doctrines, and arguments, and books, and theories, and churches, and sects, and all these things are good in their own way; but when that realisation comes, these things drop away. For instance, maps are good, but when you see the country itself, and look again at the maps, what a great difference you find! So those that have realized truth do not require the ratiocinations of logic and all other gymnastics of the intellect to make them understand the truth,; it is to them the life of their lives, concretised, made more tangible. 57

He affirms that the superconscious state never makes an error, and that inspiration requires no external test, but is immediately recognized.[58] It is only through this kind of experience that all doubts finally vanish. What is intellectually grasped, he declares, may be dislodged, but what is directly perceived can never be supplanted.[59] He has stated positively on many occasions that only through realization can there be any reality in religious

life or any genuine moral values.

9.4 A Critical Overview of Rājayoga as Means to Brahmajñāna

Our attempt to bring together the various dimensions of Vivekananda's conception of rājayoga as a means to the direct knowledge of brahman highlights certain problematic and unresolved aspects of his argument. Many of these are closely connected to crucial contrasts with Shankara's understanding of the nature of brahmajñāna and the means of its attainment. It is on these issues we must now focus our discussion.

In Chapter 8, we considered some of the reasons behind Vivekananda's proposal of distinct direct paths to moksha. We saw his argument that the yogas of karma, bhakti and jñāna were each independently capable of leading to freedom. We encountered, however, difficulties in reconciling the details of these methods with the nature of moksha as understood in Advaita. Vivekananda's rationale for rājayoga also appears to undermine this central argument of his. Here, he professes that direct perception is the only acceptable way of ascertaining religious truth, and this is attained solely through samādhi, the culmination of the discipline of rājayoga. We have seen that "all worship consciously or unconsciously leads to this end", and that rājayoga is "the science of religion, the rationale

of worship, all prayers, forms, ceremonies and miracles". In the face of these paramount and exclusive claims for rājayoga as the means par excellence, what are we to make of the view that karma, bhakti and jñāna lead directly to the desired end? Are we to understand now that these approaches are really only preparations for rājayoga, even as Shankara argues for the relationship between other methods and jñāna? In his discussion of these paths, however, Vivekananda does not make any mention of the necessity for a subsequent undertaking of the disciplines of rājayoga. He presents them as self-sufficient means for the gain of moksha. If samādhi is the only valid source of religious knowledge, and if karma, bhakti and jñāna are not to be understood as merely preparatory to rājayoga, then it would seem that we ought to comprehend these as also leading to samādhi. We have seen , however, Vivekananda's claims that the different steps of rājayoga are designed to lead the aspirant scientifically to the state of samādhi. He has also argued about the dangers of accidentally encountering this state without following the prescribed procedures of rājayoga. One is likely to be deranged, the source of knowledge will be misunderstood, and with knowledge will come superstition.

> To get any reason out of the mass incongruity we call human life, we have to transcend our reason, but we must do it scientifically, slowly, by regular practice, and we must cast off all superstition. We must take up the study of the superconscious state just as any other science. 60

If these dangers can be averted only by understanding and adopting the scheme of rājayoga, are they not present

as real possibilities for the aspirant in karma, bhakti and jñāna, where Vivekananda does not make rājayoga imperative? Will there not also be errors in knowledge and therefore, non-attainment of moksha? Vivekananda's arguments for the independence and self-sufficiency of these other means seem now under question.

We have referred from time to time in our discussion to Vivekananda's attempts to equate the gain and verification of knowledge through rājayoga with the methods employed in science. The grounds, however, upon which he draws his parallels leave many questions unanswered.[61] Vivekananda's analogy with science is basically an analogy between religious experience and sense perception. The assumption is that both are verifiable in the same way. Almost all of his examples, as well as his terminology, are drawn from the world of sense perception. There appears, however, to be very important differences between sensory experience and religious experience. Sense perception is not as simple as Vivekananda assumes, and it is certainly not always self-validating. The possibilities of sense illusion and deception are very well accepted. Even though these may not be readily apparent, there are definite criteria which are imbibed and employed in validating sense experience. It might be argued that definite criteria are also available for verifying religious experience. But the problem here is reaching agreement on those criteria. In the case of sense perception, the criteria are widely accepted, but the criteria for evaluating religious experience in any particular community of shared beliefs may not

be considered reliable in a community with different traditions.

In drawing the analogy between sense experience and religious experience, Vivekananda's comparison usually rests on the sense of sight alone. The fact, for example, that there are five distinct organs operating in a combined way, reinforcing and correcting each other, is not taken into account. In the case of his common example of the wall, sight could be reinforced by touch and sound. The absence of anything to compare with this in religious experience has to be taken into account whenever a parallel is drawn with sense perception. Agreement within a religious community on the criteria to be used in evaluating spiritual experience may be valid and genuine. There is always, however, the possibility that such agreement may be the result of lack of awareness of alternatives, the sharing of erroneous beliefs, or the use of the same techniques to produce similar results.[62] We have seen Vivekananda's acceptance of the possibility that instinct could be mistaken for the superconscious.

As we have noted earlier, Vivekananda suggests three criteria by which we could distinguish the samādhi experience from anything involving the unconscious or instinct. Out of samādhi, says Vivekananda, one emerges with wisdom. This, however, does not help us very much unless there is some prior agreement on what constitutes wisdom. It is these very truth-claims that need to be evaluated.

If we try to apply his second criterion that the experience must be in accord with reason, other problems emerge. What are the agreed forms or premises of reason to be applied? Where are these to be derived from? How can reason be employed in validating claims to which reason has no direct access and is incapable of apprehending? If the validity of the experience is dependent on its conformity to reason, providing such standards of reasoning could be agreed upon, this would seem to elevate reason to a status above that of the experience. It would also challenge Vivekananda's argument about the self-valid nature of the experience and its infallibility.

In seeking to present rājayoga as conforming to the methods of science, Vivekananda is constrained to considerably modify, if not misrepresent, the scientific process of gaining knowledge. He uses the word "experience" in the most general sense possible, when he speaks of all knowledge as being derived from experience. He does not specify the uniqueness and complexity of the "experience" through which knowledge is gained and corroborated in the physical sciences. The claims of science are not always as easily verifiable in the experiences of ordinary people as Vivekananda suggests. In the same way, Vivekananda speaks of all religious traditions as being founded on "experience", without taking into account the great diversity among and within religious traditions about their origins and the nature of their authoritative sources. But perhaps the most significant point about his loose use of the word "experience" is the fact that, in respect of samādhi,

he is making claims for a singular and unique experience, totally unlike any other. He speaks generally about science and all other religious traditions as being founded on experience, and ignoring all diversity and differences, slips into making assertions about the distinctive experience of samādhi. Another very clear example of Vivekananda's over-simplification of the methodology of science in order to underline parallels with rājayoga is his highlighting of observation or concentration as the only formula for gaining knowledge. As important as this quality of mind is in most fields of endeavour, one cannot assert that the insights gained by the scientist in the laboratory are simply the results of his concentration, or that the latter is the chief element of his methodology.

Vivekananda's analogy between samādhi and sense experience provokes another crucial question. We have seen that he speaks repeatedly about the necessity for a direct perception of the ātman, if Its very existence is to be certified beyond any doubt. Perception, however, whether ordinary or supersensuous, involves knowledge gained through objectification. It also implies a duality between the Knower and known. In Advaita, the definition of the ātman as the ultimate and only Knower, incapable of being objectified by any faculty, is one of its fundamental tenets.[63] There is no other Knower for whom the ātman can become an object. To suggest that the ātman must be known through a form of objective perception is to posit the existence of some other Knower. The objectification of the ātman by another knowing entity would also signify Its limitation, for

only a delimited thing can be objectified. Thus a suggestion about acquiring knowledge of the ātman through any kind of perception appears to deny Its very nature. Vivekananda himself argues this position very lucidly.

> You cannot by any possibility say you know Him; it would be degrading Him; You cannot get out of yourself, so you cannot know Him. Knowledge is objectification. For instance, in memory you are objectifying many things, projecting them out of yourself. All memory, all things which I have seen and which I know are in my mind. The pictures, the impressions of all these things, are in my mind, and when I would try to think of them, to know them, the first act of knowledge would be to project them outside. This cannot be done with God, because He is the essence of our souls; we cannot project Him outside ourselves... He is one with us; and that which is one with us is neither knowable nor unknowable, as our Self. You cannot know you own Self; you cannot move it out and make it an object to look at, because you are that and you cannot separate yourself from it. Neither is it unknowable, for what is better known than yourself? It is really the centre of our knowledge. In exactly the same sense, God is neither unknowable nor known, but infinitely higher than both; for He is our real Self.64

Vivekananda's proposal, through rājayoga, of the necessity and possibility of ātmajñāna by a direct perception of the existence and nature of the ātman cannot be reconciled with the fundamental Advaita position which he unequivocally formulates in the passage quoted above. It is difficult to make sense of his call for analyzing or anatomizing, by observation, the nature of the ātman. We have stated before that he draws a parallel between rājayoga and the method of science by asserting that both depend upon observation or concentration. In the case of rājayoga, the observation is supposed to be internal. We fail to see, however, how full knowledge of the ātman can be gained by any kind of observation, internal or external. As Awareness (cit),

It is the very content and basis of the observer, and not available as an object of observation. If, as Vivekananda also suggests, the content of the mind is the object of observation in rājayoga, it is not at all clear how this can afford us knowledge of the Self, the very witness of all mental processes. We gain knowledge through observation only when an object is available for scrutiny.

Vivekananda's concern for positing the possibility of a direct perception of religious truth is undoubtedly motivated by what he thinks to be the drawbacks of other arguments and approaches. The basis of his attempt to do this involves the creation of a sharp dichotomy between experience and doctrine, accepting, in doing so, the possibility of a pure uninterpreted experience. We have already noted, from many different standpoints, his belittling of everything which he considers to be doctrine and dogma. This attitude is directly related to the fact that he presupposes the existence of a pure self-interpretative experience. Recent studies on mysticism and religious experience have sharply brought into focus the flaws of this assumption, and highlighted the complexity of the interplay between experience and doctrinal interpretation.[65]

In Vivekananda's view, a clear experience is followed later by the recording, in words, of its implications and significance. This is how he conceives, for example, the origin of the Vedas.[66] The assumption is that having an experience is a distinct matter from giving it expression in language. In reality, however, no such dichotomy can

be easily demonstrated, for language and experience are inseparable. Language does not merely provide labels for describing, but, in fact, makes experience possible. It broadens the range of experience. To merely describe an experience as "religious" involves a tremendous interpretative process. Anyone, for example, lacking familiarity with the language, imagery or theology of a religion cannot describe himself as having a "religious" experience. The simplest interpretation of experience in religious terms takes for granted complex doctrinal claims with which it is heavily laden. In fact it would seem that an "uninterpreted experience" is a contradiction in terms. An experience always belongs to someone who is never free from a belief system of some kind. Experience therefore, seems to imply interpretation and never occurs in a vacuum. Even in the case of science, from which he draws most of his analogies, an uninterpreted experience is not usually a means of objective knowledge. It is only when the "simple" experiences of the physical world are seen in wider theoretical frameworks, that meaningful conclusions are drawn. It seems reasonable to suggest that experience, of itself, is not knowledge, but it puts one in a position where knowledge can be increased.

There are many issues in Vivekananda's own writings which suggest a far more dynamic and intricate interplay between experience and doctrine, than the simple one he argues for in rājayoga. In our study of his treatment of karmayoga, we noted that in spite of his claim that this method required no belief in doctrines, his entire

discussion was suffused with Advaita postulates and premises. Vivekananda also makes the same claim for the method of rājayoga as part of his plea for its scientific character. His writings on rājayoga, however, are permeated particularly with doctrinal postulates of the Sāṃkhya school. The entire system of discipline is unfolded with a specific view of the nature of man and his ultimate goal.

> The aim, the end, the goal, of all this training is liberation of the soul. Absolute control of nature, and nothing short of it, must be the goal. We must be the masters, and not the slaves of nature; neither body nor mind must be our master, nor must we forget that the body is mine, and not I the body's.67

Very important questions are raised by the fact that Vivekananda turns to the rājayoga system of Patañjali to find the veridical experience upon which he places all of his emphasis. The system of Patanjali derives its interpretative framework almost entirely from Sāṃkhya, and both exhibit fundamental doctrinal differences with Advaita. Vivekananda was not unaware of these differences.[68] The culminating experience of samādhi carries for the follower of Patañjali totally different doctrinal implications from what Vivekananda proposes. It is significantly strange that the implications of this are not considered by Vivekananda at those points in his rājayoga discussion where he deals with matters of Sāṃkhya doctrine. If different conclusions can be inferred from an identical experience, this would seem to suggest that the experience is not self-interpretative. The meaning of the experience would depend on the prior doctrinal stand of the aspirant. Vivekananda clearly seems to think that the experiences

of mystics in all religious traditions are the same.[69] What their radical differences tell us about the self-valid nature of the experience are not fully explored by him. His suggestion, earlier discussed, that the nature of samādhi is easily misunderstood by someone not properly trained in its method and meaning, only reinforces the argument that the experience is not self-explanatory.

Other questions about the nature of samādhi as a self-valid source of knowledge are raised by Vivekananda's own descriptions of the experience. We have already made reference to the tension between his portrayal of samādhi as a state in which the mind is actively existent, even if at a higher level, and one in which it ceases to exist. Arguing from Vivekananda's own standpoint, we are obliged to accept that the latter description is more accurate if samādhi is to be conceived as a state wherein one is identical with the non-dual reality of the universe. The difficulty, however, is that a state in which the differences between the Knower, object known, and process of knowing are transcended cannot be described as involving any kind of perception. Even the word "experience", suggesting duality, is an inappropriate description. If knowledge is an activity and affirmation of the mind, how can such a state be described as one involving the gain of knowledge? Who is there to perceive, to know anything, to be enlightened? Even as the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad (2.4.14) defines the non-dual ātman:

> Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something, one thinks something, one knows something. (But) when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one see and through what, what should one hear and through what, what should one speak and through what, what should one think and through what, what should one know, and through what? Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known - through what, O Maitreyī, should one know the Knower?

Chāndogya Upanishad (7.24.1) offers a similar definition.

> Wherein one sees nothing else, hears nothing else and understands nothing else, - that is the Infinite; wherein one sees something else, hears something else, and understands something else, - that is Finite.

If there is any possibility of a return from the state of samādhi, there is also the difficulty of explaining how the conscious mind can make any affirmation or inferences about an experience which involved its total transcendence. In this context, Vivekananda's inability to recall much of his own experience is perhaps significant.

In Chapters 7 and 8, we tried to present some of the significant areas of divergence between Shankara and Vivekananda, with respect to the means of attaining moksha. Further points emerge from considering Vivekananda's rājayoga discussion. The most obvious is, of course, Vivekananda's insistence on samādhi as the authoritative source of brahmajñāna. This is in radical contrast to Shankara's entire justification of śruti as the only conceivable medium of this knowledge. Related to this fundamental disagreement over the source of brahmajñāna are other very interesting matters of dissimilarity.

Along with Vivekananda's plea for samādhi as the

only self-valid source of knowledge, we get the impression that he conceives of moksha as only obtaining in that state.

> When a man reaches the superconscious state, all feeling of body melts away. Then alone does he become free and immortal.70
>
> That is the goal - the superconscious. Then, when that state is reached, this very man becomes divine, becomes free.71

In fact, Vivekananda uses the word liberation as synonymous with samādhi.[72] This state, as we have seen, is attained only when the conscious mind is completely transcended. Vivekananda emphasizes that religion and spirituality do not belong to the field of the senses or the intellect; they belong to the supersensuous.[73] With Vivekananda, the mind overcomes its inherent limitations to apprehend truth independently, by transcending itself, or even dying. There is also another significant feature of his characterization of moksha, which emerges from his rājayoga discussion. This appears to be associated with his view of moksha as obtaining only in samādhi. Vivekananda mentions the goal as the real separation of the Self from the body and from all of nature.[74] It is described also as only being attained when the Self attains complete mastery over internal and external nature.[75] These conclusions appear to us to be clearly different from Shankara's understanding of what constitutes moksha, and seem more congenial in the Sāmkhya-Yoga doctrinal context that in Advaita.[76]

In our study of Shankara, we found no evidence to

suggest that he conceived of brahmajñāna as occurring only through the transcendence of the ordinary level of mental functioning. On the other hand, the overwhelming evidence of the manner in which he understands the problem of avidyā and its resolution through inquiry into the śruti indicates that he saw brahmajñāna as occurring only in and through the mind.[77] In Chapter 4.1, we have shown that Shankara does not see the necessity for any pramāṇa, even the śruti, to reveal the existence of the ātman. As Awareness, the ātman is always self-revealing and not completely unknown. This is in contrast to Vivekananda, who sees the superconscious experience as necessary for establishing both the existence and nature of the ātman. The problem of avidyā therefore, for Shankara, is one of incomplete and erroneous knowledge of an ever available and manifesting ātman, arising out of the inability to distinguish It from the non-Self. At the individual level, avidyā is also a mode or modification (vritti) of the mind, where the problem of false knowledge lies, and where alone it can be corrected. For this, another mental mode, truly coinciding with the entity to be known has to be produced by an adequate means of knowledge. For Shankara, the śruti is this source of knowledge. Although Shankara shares with Vivekananda the view that the reasoning process of the mind is independently incapable of arriving at a true knowledge of the ātman, he proposes that these limitations can be overcome by recourse to śruti as śabda-pramāna. He nowhere advances that these limitations can be surmounted by the mind transcending itself or entering a higher state in the sense in which Vivekananda submits. Because reason

is an important tool which we employ in understanding the meaning of the śruti, in removing, as far as possible, all doubts, and in dealing with contradictory views, it appears to have a much more positive and valued role in Shankara with respect to the gain of brahmajñāna.[78] There is an impassioned derogation and belittlement of the human intellect in Vivekananda, which we do not at all find in the commentaries of Shankara.

It is very significant to note that some texts of the Upanishads which Vivekananda identifies as describing the superconscious experience are interpreted by Shankara as śruti attempts to define the ātman.[79] K.E. U.1.3, "There the eyes cannot reach nor speech nor mind", is seen by Shankara as a śruti definition of brahman as Subject or Knower of the eyes, the organ of speech and the mind. It expresses for him the impossibility of knowing brahman as an object of cognition. He sees K.E.U. 2.2, "We cannot say that we know it, we cannot say that we do not know it", as identical in purport K.E.U. 1.4, "It is different from the known and is also above the unknown". Brahman's difference from the known is seen by Shankara as again denying the availability and nature of brahman as one of the objects of the world. That brahman is different also from the unknown points, for Shankara, to Its nature as the Self.

> When it is affirmed that It is different from the unknown, it amounts to saying that It is not a thing to be obtained. It is for the sake of getting an effect that somebody acquires something different from himself to serve as a cause. For this reason,

> too, nothing different from the Self need be acquired to serve any purpose distinct from the knower (Self). Thus the statement, that Brahman is different from the known and the unknown, having amounted to Brahman being denied as an object to be acquired or rejected, the desire of the disciple to know Brahman (objectively) comes to an end, for Brahman is non-different from the Self. For nothing other than one's own Self can possibly be different from the known and the unknown. Then it follows that the meaning of the sentence is that the Self is Brahman.80

T.A.U. 2.9.1, "Whence words fall back with the mind without reaching it", expresses for Shankara the difficulty of defining brahman through the generally accepted forms of word usage.[81]

Vivekananda's identification of moksha with the state of samādhi leaves us with a certain ambiguity as far as his attitude towards the concept of the jīvanmukta is concerned. Except for fundamental differences in the way knowledge is gained, there are occasions when he formulates the concept in general agreement with Shankara.[82] On these occasions, he explains that the body is retained after brahmajñāna because of the persistence of unexhausted karma. Because of the jñānī's knowledge, however, the world no longer causes him any pain, misery or grief. Elsewhere, Vivekananda speaks of the impossibility of any return from the state of samādhi.

> The conclusion of the Vedanta is that when there is absolute Samadhi and the cessation of all modifications, there is no return from that state.83

Only avatāras, explains Vivekananda, who retain desires for the good of the world return from samādhi. This position seems to negate the possibility of the state of jīvanmukta, unless one proposes that every jīvanmukta is an avatāra. There is no evidence, however, that Vivekananda equates

both concepts.

If one sticks rigidly to Vivekananda's contention, one would have to admit that only avatāras can be teachers and transmitters of brahmajñāna, for no one else would survive the gain of knowledge in samādhi. If anyone else did, his experience and knowledge would have to be considered incomplete. Perhaps this stand of Vivekananda has to be seen in relation to the view, noted earlier, that freedom involves a real detachment or separation of the Self from the body and all of nature. If this occurs only in samādhi, then any other state is bondage.[84] With Shankara, on the other hand, where the problem of avidyā is defined as adhyāsa (superimposition), the presence of the body or the world does not constitute or imply bondage. The limitation of the Self is always only notional, and the state of jīvanmukta becomes possible with the removal of avidyā.[85] In support of his claim that there is no return from the state of samādhi, Vivekananda simply cites B.S. 4.4.22, "There is no return for released souls on the strength of the Upanishadic declaration; there is no return for the released souls on the strength of the Upanishadic declaration".[86] Shankara, however, sees this sūtra as affirming the non-return to the world of transmigration of two classes of aspirants. Those who have attained the world of brahma (brahma-loka) dwell there until the dissolution of the creation, after which they are no longer subject to rebirth. The verse also affirms freedom for those, on the other hand, who have attained brahmajñāna

here, and for whom moksha is an already accomplished fact.[87]

Vivekananda's argument that knowledge of the Self can be gained through independent internal observation by the mind of its own contents has no parallel in Shankara. In our study of Shankara, we tried to highlight the fact that his entire rationale for the śruti is focused on the argument that the knowledge which it affords is not otherwise obtainable. Neither have we found any corresponding view in Shankara for Vivekananda's assertion that knowledge of the Self spontaneously follows the concentration or silencing of the mind. In fact, it is difficult to know what exactly Vivekananda means when he speaks of brahman as becoming manifest when mental modifications are extinguished. That brahman is not always manifest and available would imply some kind of limitation. While it is clear in Shankara that what is to be attained is brahmajñāna and not brahman, with Whom identity already exists, Vivekananda often leaves one wondering. He does not always distinguish the necessity for gaining brahmajñāna, as opposed to brahman. We have already cited Shankara's refutation of Yoga and its disciplines as direct means to brahmajñāna, and his specific rebuttal of the argument that moksha can be obtained through concentration of the mind.[88] This clearly undermines Vivekananda's assertion that rājayoga is the method advocated by all schools of Indian philosophy for gaining moksha. Shankara's position is that the purity and steadiness of mind discovered through the practices of Yoga are indirect aids to the gain of knowledge, but cannot themselves give rise to knowledge.

We associated Vivekananda's view that knowledge naturally follows the silencing of the mind, with his theory that all knowledge is already within the individual. It appears to us that while it is feasible to argue that all knowledge occurs in the mind, it is difficult and different to assert that all knowledge is already there. Vivekananda's view is contradictory to Shankara's position that brahmajñāna springs from inquiry into the words and sentences of the Upanishads. His related view that the role of the spiritual teacher is only to arouse an inherent knowledge is also opposed to the function of the teacher in Shankara, as we have understood it.[89] It is the teacher who, through his exegesis of the śruti and skilful handling of words, generates a hitherto unknown knowledge. He is not merely a stimulus or suggestion.[90] Vivekananda's view that this doctrine represents the stand of Vedānta is therefore, difficult to sustain. It is also difficult to find the support which he claims for this doctrine in the Bhagavadgītā.[91]

Vivekananda's attempt to present several direct and independent ways for the attainment of moksha leaves many questions unanswered and reveals inherent contradictions. In terms of the Advaita formulation of the nature of avidyā, and its conception of the ātman and moksha, Vivekananda has not clearly demonstrated how these different means lead to freedom. In Chapter 8, we examined these difficulties in relation to the methods of karma, bhakti and jñāna. In the present discussion we sought to outline and evaluate the method of rājayoga. In addition to highlighting radical differences from Shankara, the case which Vivekananda

makes out for the necessity and possibility of a direct perception of the truths about the ātman presents us with numerous inevasible problems. Among the many problematic issues we have considered, the very idea of perception in relation to the ātman contradicts Its fundamental nature as Awareness, incapable of any objectification.+

+[The reader might wonder whether the many contradictions in Vivekananda's thought could be explained by the chronological development and change of his views. Such an explanation, however, is not tenable, since close study of his lectures and writings does not reveal that these views have undergone any consistent development.]

CONCLUSION

Vivekananda's attitude towards scriptural authority was moulded in an atmosphere where the most progressive movement of the day, the Brahmo Samaj, of which he was a member for a short time, had unequivocally rejected the ultimate authority of the śruti. This is undoubtedly one of the most significant and dramatic developments in the recent history of Hinduism, and one which has played a major part in influencing the contemporary understanding of the śruti. The environment of Vivekananda's youth was surcharged with a scepticism and mistrust of the authority and value of scriptural texts, voiced particularly by the very popular and influential Keshub Chandra Sen. There can be little doubt that this prevailing and almost unanimous orientation among the leading liberal reformers and thinkers affected Vivekananda's own approach to scriptural authority. Along with the theology of the Brahmo Samaj, the distinct influence of Keshub Chandra Sen on Vivekananda is a fruitful area for more detailed study.

Paradoxically, the resolution to revoke the Vedas as the supreme authoritative source of Hinduism came in response to Christian missionary invective against

the doctrine of Vedic infallibility. Adherence to the authority of the Vedas became a cause for positive embarassment to the Brahmo Samaj. In responding to missionary censure, the Samaj utilized arguments and doctrines derived from Unitarian Christianity and also found there congenial suggestions about alternative sources of religious knowledge. In particular, they seized upon the concepts of intuition and nature as such sources and sought, with very little success, to construct a theology on the basis of what could be known through these means. The consequence was that while the movement initiated and contributed to various social reform measures, there was minimal theological development. This is reflected in their failure to establish and maintain a regular theological school. The absence of any theological originality or uniqueness which the Samaj might have creatively derived from its Hindu roots is further demonstrated by the fact that it could accept, with no contradiction, the training of its teachers at a Unitarian institution in England.

While the roots of many of Vivekananda's ideas could be traced back to the Brahmo Samaj, there is an essential difference which explains Vivekananda's more widespread appeal. The Brahmo Samaj openly ridiculed many of the doctrines and practices of Hinduism and was not generally concerned to preserve a Hindu identity. Keshub Chandra Sen, in fact, consciously sought to terminate links between the Brahmo Samaj of India and the wider Hindu tradition. The influence and example of Ramakrishna distinguished

Vivekananda's approach to Hinduism from the Brahmo Samaj. In Ramakrishna, he perceived someone who, without any of the Western learning which characterized most of the Brahmo leaders, had attained to the pinnacle of Hindu spirituality by adopting many of the beliefs and practices vehemently condemned by the reformers. In Ramakrishna's eclectic vision an explanation and justification was found for almost everything which had become a part of Hinduism. In almost everyone of his major public addresses in India, Vivekananda scathingly denounced many reformist views and deliberately disassociated himself from their methods. The following two examples of his outbursts reflect the intensity of his disapproval of certain reformist approaches, especially those that were European-inspired.

> For nearly the past one hundred years, our country has been flooded with social reform proposals. Personally, I have no fault to find with these reformers. Most of them are good, well-meaning men, and their aims too are very laudable on certain points; but it is quite a patent fact that this one hundred years of social reform has produced no permanent and valuable result appreciable throughout the country. Platform speeches have been made by the thousand, denunciations in volumes have been hurled upon the devoted head of the Hindu race, and its civilization, and yet no practical result has been achieved; and where is the reason for that? The reason is not hard to find. It is in denunciation itself.1

> There are among us at the present day certain reformers who want to reform our religion or rather turn it topsyturvy with a view to regeneration of the Hindu nation. There are, no doubt, some thoughtful people among them, but there are also many who follow others blindly and act most foolishly, not knowing what they are about. This class of reformers are very enthusiastic in introducing foreign ideas into our religion. They have taken the word 'idolatry', and aver that Hinduism is not true, because it is idolatrous. They never seek to find out what this so-called 'idolatry' is, whether it is good or bad; only taking their cue from others, they are bold enough to shout down Hinduism as untrue. 2

While he did not reject the urgent necessity for change and innovation in Hinduism, Vivekananda subtly emphasized that what he desired was "growth" and "expansion" rather than "reformation". Describing himself as a non-believer in reform, he defined the reformist method as one of "destruction", while his was an attempt at "construction".[3] This delicate and astute distinction enabled Vivekananda to be critical of the Hindu tradition while never alienating himself from it. He struck a very original and fine balance between an aggressive defence of Hinduism and a vociferous cry for transformation. This fact provides the most important clue to understanding Vivekananda's popularity and the nature of the reinterpretations which he formulated. Vivekananda also distinguished himself from his Brahmo contemporaries by his linking of Hindu revival with Indian nationalism and patriotism and his greater appeal to these sentiments. The way in which his presentation of Hinduism was shaped by this identification of religion and nationalism needs more detailed study.

The general orientation of the Brahmo Samaj towards scriptural authority provided a strong stimulus to Vivekananda's reinterpretation of the nature and basis of the authority of <u>śruti</u>. From this source also, he might have derived suggestions about an alternative source of spiritual knowledge. The crucial difference, however, is that Vivekananda sought the elements of his reinterpretation within the Hindu tradition. If one had to seek for a single model in the light of which Vivekananda attempted to formulate his view of the <u>śruti</u> and the process of

attaining brahmajñāna, one must turn to his understanding of the nature of the scientific method. It is his use of this model, however, which also gives rise to many of the problems presented by his formulation. Science as a method of attaining knowledge about man and the universe, and as the key to human progress was enjoying considerable prestige among the Bengali intelligentsia in the nineteenth century. It was widely felt that all systems of human thought, including religion, had to be validated by the scrutiny of science and reason.[4] This prompted attempts within the Brahmo Samaj to seek a reconciliation of their religious views with what they understood to be the propositions and methods of science. A.K. Datta, for example, suggested that the approach to God should be through the study of the natural sciences, and Keshub Chandra Sen tried to justify his views in the name of science.

The impact of science on Vivekananda's views and the esteem with which it was regarded are evident in his lectures and writings. He continuously seeks to demonstrate the compatibility of Advaita with the findings of science, and presents this as one of the principal arguments in favour of this system. His understanding of science is the paradigmatic basis upon which he constructs a view of the śruti and the method of attaining brahmajñāna, and his interpretations are most explicable in this context and background. The frequent attempts in recent studies, noted in Chapter 1, to draw analogies between Shankara's epistemology and the method of science is a reflection

of Vivekananda's continuing influence. While Vivekananda's concern to express his views in relation to science might have been partly influenced by certain approaches within the Brahmo Samaj, the resulting synthesis was an original one.

It is very interesting therefore, to venture a brief reconstruction of Vivekananda's thought against the background of what he understood to be the scientific method. The influence of this method is primarily evident in his aim to demonstrate that the validity of religious propositions need not depend on what he considered to be the weak foundation of faith and belief. Vivekananda represented the Vedas as a collection of spiritual laws, often emphasizing that they were not books. These spiritual laws are portrayed to be like the natural laws governing our physical universe in that their existence is independent of human apprehension. The doctrine of Vedic eternity therefore, can now be represented as the timelessness of impersonal laws, rather than of a word-revelation. Even as scientists do not create physical laws, but only discover these by the application of proper methods, Vivekananda portrays the āptas or rishis as only the "discoverers" of spiritual laws. Like a scientific manual then, the Vedas, as books, are just the written records of these spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times.

The representation of the Vedas as records or reports of spiritual findings and the rishis as discoverers provide the foundation for the deepening and development of the

scientific paradigm. One is not obliged, according to Vivekananda, to accept scientific propositions as valid because of faith in the individual scientist. As a method of gaining knowledge, he sees science as being distinguished by the fact that it offers the possibility of verification. One can personally confirm the findings of a scientist by the application of proper methods. In the same way, according to Vivekananda, the spiritual aspirant is not condemned to establishing his convictions on the basis of his faith in the ā*pta* or in the ā*pta's* reports as recorded in the *Vedas*. Neither the scientist nor the ā*pta* is genuine, says Vivekananda, if a claim is made for a unique access to knowledge. Verification is the all-important factor and the ā*pta* must hold out such a possibility. In the *Vedas*, just as in the report of a scientist, the ā*pta* only has the right to tell us what he has discovered and the methods which he employed. If we have confidence in the ā*pta* and the scientist, we may accept their claims as provisionally true. These claims, however, especially in the case of the spiritual aspirant, can never have any ultimately convincing validity unless they are personally rediscovered and verified by an application of the same methods. In the case of the *Vedas*, Vivekananda not only emphasizes the possibility of verification, but also its necessity. The foundation of knowledge therefore, for Vivekananda, is not the authority of the *Vedas* as a word-revelation, since the texts only indicate a method for the direct apprehension of spiritual facts.

It is within this context of his endeavour to reconstruct the process of attaining brahmajñāna in Advaita on the model of the scientific method that we can best see and understand Vivekananda's version of the significance of the śruti. Śruti, he affirms, may stimulate a desire for first-hand knowledge, but it is in itself only "theoretical" or second-hand knowledge. Śruti is not, as in Shankara, a pramāṇa for the conclusive knowledge of brahman, but the unfolding of a method for the direct and independent discovery of spiritual facts. While in spiritual childhood we may rely on the śruti, we must eventually transcend it and certify its claims. Even as a scientific experiment can be repeated if we wish to personally substantiate its hypothesis, so also the discovery of brahmajñāna by one person is evidence of the competence and necessity of every other human being to attain it by the same method.

The scientific analogy continues and is further elaborated by Vivekananda when he details the method by which brahmajñāna is gained. He very consciously sets out to demonstrate that this method is like the process of attaining and verifying knowledge in the physical sciences. It is very significant that Vivekananda finds this method in the rājayoga system of Patañjali, and not in the Upanishads on which Shankara bases his interpretation of Advaita. We have examined the enormous difficulties presented by the method of rājayoga in relation to Vivekananda's attempts to identify it with the procedures of science. His parallels are possible only through a radical simplification of the scientific method. The scientific analogy revolves

around his key concept of "experience" (anubhava). In designating "experience" as the common basis of knowledge in both rājayoga and science, Vivekananda overlooks the complexity of the so-called "experience" through which knowledge is gained in the sciences. The scientific technique is even further simplified in the interests of superficial similarities when he argues for observation or concentration as its chief feature. The self-valid quality which he posits of both sense perception and religious experience disregards the difficulties which both present. In the case of religious experience it presumes a self-interpretativeness which glosses over the influence of doctrinal assumptions on interpretation, an influence strongly demonstrated in Vivekananda's own writings. In fact, it is indeed strange that, as an Advaitin, Vivekananda so strongly argues for the immediate validity of sense perception. Advaita contends that the universe which is apprehended through the senses is an inexplicable appearance of brahman. In positing that brahman, in reality, is free from the characteristics possessed by the objects of the universe, Advaita questions the ultimate validity of the impressions we form of the world on the basis of sense perception.

The problems of using rājayoga as the method of attaining brahmajñāna are not only confined to drawing dubious analogies with science. The approach is also undermined by serious problems originating mainly from two sources. The first of these relate to the fact that rājayoga and its culminating experience of samādhi have their doctrinal

basis in the system of Sāṃkhya which differs from Advaita on crucial issues concerning the nature of the ātman and moksha. In spite of his awareness of these divergences, Vivekananda neglects their significance in proposing samādhi as the authoritative source of brahmajñāna. We have specified another set of problems deriving from Vivekananda's very definition of samādhi, and his claims for it as a state and source of knowledge. It is not only contradictory to speak of a state of non-duality as involving "perception", but it is also untenable, within the context of Advaita, to propose a direct perception of the ātman in samādhi. Such a proposition presupposes another Self for which the ātman must become a limited object of knowledge.

Vivekananda's assertion that karmayoga, bhaktiyoga, jñānayoga and rājayoga can be direct and independent ways to the attainment of moksha is closely linked to his reinterpretation of the significance of the śruti and his upholding of the samādhi-experience as the ultimately valid source of brahmajñāna. For Shankara, who advocates the śruti as the unique source of this knowledge, inquiry (jijñāsā) into the words of the śruti with the help of a teacher is the only means of attaining brahmajñāna. There are disciplines and aids for assisting the inquirer in gaining and assimilating the knowledge born out of the śruti, but there is no substitute for the śruti as the valid source. For Vivekananda, who endorses an experience (viz. samādhi), rather than sruti, as the valid source of knowledge, it is perhaps more plausible to posit different

ways of attaining this experience. This is what Vivekananda sets out to do in his elaboration of the methods of karmayoga, bhaktiyoga, jñānayoga and rājayoga.

The thesis that there are four different paths to the attainment of moksha was employed by Vivekananda to demonstrate the superiority of Hinduism in its capacity to be able to cater for different spiritual needs and temperaments. Today, like so many of Vivekananda's interpretations, it has become a standard argument in Hindu apologetic writing and even in scholarly studies written by both Hindus and non-Hindus. When, however, Vivekananda's arguments are subjected to close scrutiny in relation to basic Advaita propositions about the nature of avidyā and moksha, they are unconvincing. There is no attempt to carefully relate the nature of each method to the assumptions of avidyā as the fundamental problem. At crucial points in his discussion, where it is necessary to clearly demonstrate the connection between a particular method and the attainment of moksha in the Advaita sense, he becomes vague and obscure in his terminology and concepts. In the case of bhaktiyoga, for example, he claims, but fails to establish that the movement from the dualism of worship to the unity and identity of brahmajñāna is a natural one. He argues for jñānayoga as a method of pure reason, but presents a wider view of the limitations of reason which nullifies this argument. While arguing that belief in doctrines is dispensable, his characterization of each method is permeated with doctrinal assumptions. We appear to have to accept that avidyā inexplicably

and spontaneously vanishes. Ultimately Vivekananda contradicts his own thesis that each of the four paths can independently lead to moksha when he argues that the samādhi-experience afforded by the discipline of rājayoga is the only valid source of brahmajñāna. While the assertion about different ways of attaining moksha has a certain liberal appeal, it requires far more than this to be rationally convincing, and there is no evidence that the many difficulties were carefully considered by Vivekananda.

In an age of scepticism, we can readily understand and perhaps even identify with Vivekananda's compelling desire to propose a means to the attainment of spiritual knowledge which did not depend on faith (śraddhā) in the śruti as a pramāna. He felt that this means offered the possibility of doubtless knowledge, as objective and verifiable as knowledge gained by the application of the scientific method. This is the motive which led to his radical divergences from Shankara, and his attempts to reinterpret the significance of the śruti and suggest alternative means for the attainment of brahmajñāna. It is clear, however, that his reconstruction of the basis of knowledge of Advaita and Hinduism is far from successful. Although his synthesis has been uncritically adopted into modern Advaita and Hindu writings, it presents innumerable problems, leaves many questions unanswered and on several crucial issues contradicts fundamental Advaita propositions which he himself accepts. His aim to suggest a more convincing source of brahmajñāna remains unaccomplished.

Vivekananda lived at a time of tumult and trauma in the history of Hinduism resulting from the impact of the West. In his reformulation of Advaita, he responded to and incorporated many of the diverse influences which were exerting themselves on Hinduism. The turbulence of his times is reflected in the synthesis which he attempted. In a very short career, he injected a spirit of confidence into Hinduism, and his many positive achievements must be acknowledged. One of his most progressive concerns was to elicit from Advaita the justification for a life of commitment to the service of society. He also sought to challenge the widespread indifference of Hindu society to poverty and suffering. It is understandable, but unfortunate, that his presentation of Advaita was not more critically appraised during his lifetime so that he could have responded to many of its problems and contradictions. Such an approach, however, cannot be condoned today, in view of the fact that the Vivekananda legacy is not all positive.

Vivekananda's championing of an experience (anubhava) as the ultimate source of spiritual knowledge encouraged the divorce of scholarship from spirituality in modern Advaita and Hinduism. This effect can be best demonstrated by contrast with the approach and methods of Shankara. For Shankara, śruti is the definitive source of brahmajñāna, and the immediate result of this knowledge is moksha. As a pramāna, śruti is constituted of words, and these must be understood as they are intended to be. Scriptural learning, study and exegesis therefore, become very important,

along with the disciplines such as grammar and etymology which aid interpretation. Proper principles for arriving at the right meaning of texts are necessary. It is very important to note that the acceptance of śruti as an authoritative pramāṇa did not mean the abandonment of a very significant role for reason. Reason is important in deciding between different interpretations of particular śruti texts and in reconciling apparently conflicting ones. Reason also has a major part to play in demonstrating that the affirmations of śruti are not inconsistent with what we know about the world and ourselves from other pramāṇas. It also plays a crucial role in assessing and responding to rival views. Shankara obviously takes doctrinal differences very seriously, and in responding to the claims of rival systems which do not accept the authority of the śruti, he is constrained to try to demonstrate the validity of Advaita on the basis of the reasonableness of its propositions. Opposing views are carefully outlined by Shankara, and the significance and development of doctrinal and philosophical argument are evident in his commentaries.

The decline of the significance of the śruti during the ascendancy of the Brahmo Samaj and Vivekananda's own characterization of it as second-hand religion contributed to a low estimation of the value of scriptural scholarship. Because śruti is no longer seen as the definitive source of brahmajñāna, its study, exegesis and right interpretation are not of the utmost importance. The intellectual disciplines which aid interpretation are also less valued. In

our examination of Vivekananda's attitude towards the Vedas, we have seen how he fervently and repeatedly denounces the value of scriptural study, learning and scholarship in the quest for moksha. These are contemptuously dismissed as activities at a "theoretical" and "intellectual" level, and Vivekananda even classifies scriptures as belonging to the non-essentials of religion. The full impact of this attitude on contemporary Hinduism has not attracted sufficient attention.

The upholding of the samādhi-experience, instead of the śruti, as the self-valid source of brahmajñāna is also connected to a low esteem of the value of reason. For Shankara, conclusive knowledge is gained by the application of one's reason to the analysis of a valid source of knowledge. Since knowledge occurs in the mind, and is mediated through reason, the demands of the latter, as far as possible, must be satisfied. With Vivekananda, on the other hand, knowledge is not gained by the mediation of reason, but by its transcendence. This transcendence is, in fact, the very condition for the gain of that knowledge. In Vivekananda therefore, reason, argument and intellectual activity, in general, assume more of an obstructive character in relation to the gain of brahmajñāna. Since conclusive knowledge can only be attained through a special experience, doubts can never be resolved by rational argument. Paradoxically, it would seem that where, as in Shankara, faith (śraddhā) in the śruti as a pramāṇa is necessary for the gain of knowledge, reason has a much more positive role in clarifying, explaining and defending the propositions of that pramāṇa. On the

other hand, where an attempt is made, as in Vivekananda, to supersede the necessity for faith, in the interest of being more rational, reason becomes less significant and so does philosophical argument. The lack of development in contemporary Hinduism of philosophic argument must be connected to the emphasis on an experience as the ultimate source of knowledge, and this link needs to be studied more closely.

Vivekananda's derision for scholarship, his ridicule of doctrine and dogma, and his belittling of reason are reflected in his treatment of doctrinal differences. On the whole, he attaches little importance to the reality and implications of these. This attitude is most evident in his discussion of the yogas of karma, bhakti, jñāna and rāja as means to the attainment of moksha. His outline of the method of bhaktiyoga, for example, is almost entirely derived from Ramanuja, and yet he unhesitatingly glosses over the import of Ramanuja's many doctrinal differences with Shankara and affirms that the method naturally culminates in non-duality. He extracts the samādhi-concept from the Sāmkhya-Yoga system and presents it as the authoritative source of knowledge in Advaita, overlooking the implications of crucial philosophical divergences between both schools. It would seem that because Vivekananda posits the gain of valid spiritual knowledge only through an experience transcending the rational mind, he is able to dismiss the importance of differences born out of and existing at this level of the mind. He has not proved, however, that this experience is a self-valid one, and that its

meaning is independent of doctrinal influence and interpretation. Vivekananda's minimizing and underplaying, in contrast to Shankara, of the significance of the deep doctrinal differences between different schools of Indian philosophical thought must also be related to his concern to emphasize the unity and common basis of the Indian spiritual tradition. This again has to be seen in the context of his wider concern for Indian national unity.

It is only by overlooking and dismissing the importance of different doctrinal and philosophical claims that one can so easily assert, as Vivekananda does, that all spiritual paths and methods lead to the same goal. This argument which owes its elaboration to Vivekananda, and which, in its various formulations, has become a standard claim in contemporary Hindu rhetoric has to be seen and evaluated in the light of his approach to epistemology and his scant regard for divergent doctrinal claims. In view of the importance of this argument in the modern Hindu approach to other religious traditions, it is well worth more detailed study and appraisal. A valued tolerance of doctrinal differences need not lead to the dismissal of their reality and significance.

It is true that in the quest for moksha, the value of scholarship and learning has to be placed in proper perspective. Scholarship is only a means and never an end in itself. Viewed as an end, it can easily degenerate into sterile pedantry. Śruti affords a knowledge which leads to the gain of moksha, and scholarship is chiefly

an aid to its proper understanding. It is more important to the individual who aims to be a teacher. Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12 mentions proficiency in the meaning of the śruti (śrotriyam) as one of the two qualities necessary for the teacher (guru). The other is establishment in the knowledge of brahman (brahmanishtham). In view of Vivekananda's influence on modern Hinduism, it is unfortunate that he did not adopt a more balanced view of the value of scholarship in the quest for moksha. The decline of scholarship and its dissociation from spirituality is one of the most lamentable trends in the recent history of Hinduism. Its reflection in the poor state of theological education in Hinduism needs further study. There is also a need for an examination of the Upanishadic ideal of the nature, qualifications and functions of the teacher (guru), and a contrast of this with Vivekananda's presentation of Ramakrishna as the model teacher in Hinduism. How far the emphasis on the gain of spiritual knowledge through an experience, rather than through the śruti, has altered the understanding of the nature of the guru needs to be studied, as well as its connection with the confusing proliferation of gurus in contemporary Hinduism. We need to examine the claim which the modern teacher makes on behalf of his own authority, along with the expectations which the student has of the teacher. All this should be interestingly related to the functions and expectations of the teacher when śruti is maintained as the authoritative source of knowledge.

The great challenge to the Pūrva-Mīmānsā system was

to provide a rationale for the authority of the Vedas which was not connected to the nature or character of a personal author. Pūrva-Mīmānsā is atheistic in outlook and posits the view that the Vedas are authorless (apaurusheya). It is as a response to this dilemma that one best understands the arguments of this school for the validity of the Vedas. The fact that these texts are authorless, Pūrva-Mīmānsā claims, is precisely why they are authoritative. They are free from any possible defects and limitations of authorship. Pūrva-Mīmānsā asserts that the Vedas, as a source of valid knowledge, are eternal and uncreated. This view is supported by the doctrine that the words of the Vedas, since they primarily signify eternal universals and not the transitory particulars of the creation, are also eternal. The connection between Vedic words and their referents is eternal and free from error.

The Pūrva-Mīmānsā justification of the Vedas by reference to their eternity is adopted and defended by Shankara and forms part of his own rationale for the authoritativeness of this pramāna. Unlike Pūrva-Mīmānsā, however, Advaita accepts the existence of Īśvara, and posits Him as the revealer of the Vedas. Īśvara only reveals the Vedas as they were revealed in previous creations. Despite the ascribing of this function to Īśvara, Shankara does not argue for the authority of the Vedas on the basis of Īśvara's omniscience. Because the latter fact is known

only from the Vedas, to use it to justify the Vedas would be to employ a circular argument. When, however, we learn from the Vedas, of Īśvara's existence and nature, and of Him as the source of the Vedas, we can use rational arguments to support this knowledge, since it is not contradictory to reason. This is the kind of argument used by Shankara in Brahma-sūtra 1.1.3 to demonstrate why brahman alone can be the source of the Vedas. It is an important dimension of Shankara's rationale for the Vedas which is different from Pūrva-Mīmānsā.

The system of Pūrva-Mīmānsā, however, does not accept that the Vedas are a pramāṇa for the knowledge of brahman. In their view, the purport of the Vedas lies only in the inculcation of dharma. Dharma is accomplished through appropriate action, physical and mental, and so this system asserts that a direct and independent authority can only be ascribed to injunctions (vidhi) inculcating the performance of acceptable acts and prohibitions (nishedha) instituting restraint from acts opposed to dharma. Sentences which do not exhort us to perform a desirable action or restrain us from an undesirable one are, by themselves, meaningless, and are meant only to subserve injunctive sentences. This view of Pūrva-Mīmānsā about the authority of the Vedas is entirely opposed to Shankara's claim that the Vedānta-vākyas have an independent authority in revealing an already existent brahman and do not seek to impel us into any activity. While Shankara therefore, used Pūrva-Mīmānsā arguments about the eternity of the Vedas as part of his proof for their authority, he was obliged to develop

an entirely independent rationale and justification for śruti as a pramāṇa of brahmajñāna. It is here that the originality of Shankara is very evident, and the forcefulness, consistency and appeal of his arguments are best demonstrated. It is this rationale which underlines the radical divergences of Vivekananda, and which this study has sought to highlight. It is the significance of this rationale which modern commentators seem largely to have missed, and which falsifies the argument that Shankara appealed to the śruti merely to gain the support of an established authority for his views.

Śruti, according to Shankara, affords a knowledge which is necessary for the happiness naturally persued by all human beings and which cannot be obtained through any other source. It is not the concern of the śruti to inform us of ends and means which we can learn about through other pramāṇas. For Shankara, the sphere of the śruti's authority is confined to the revelation of dharma and brahman. Dharma is the authoritative concern of the karmakāṇḍa sections of the Vedas, while the Upanishads (i.e. Vedānta-vākyas) have an entirely independent purpose in the revelation of the knowledge of brahman.

The cornerstone of Shankara's case for śruti as the only valid means of knowing brahman is that because of the very nature of brahman, śruti as a pramāṇa in the form of words is the only logical means. While his contention for śruti as the only pramāṇa of brahmajñāna is not divorced from his wider views about its authoritativeness, in this

case the argument is as much centred on the logic of words (śabda) as the only conceivable means through which this knowledge could be imparted and attained. It is really a justification of śabda as opposed to any other pramāṇa, and this fact lends to his rationale a certain undogmatic character. What gives Shankara's argument its force and makes it difficult to dismiss is the logical interdependence which he demonstrates between the appropriateness of the pramāṇa and the nature of the entity to be known. The relationship here is between brahman as the entity to be known, and śabda as the means of knowledge. It is extremely significant that there is no place in Vivekananda's writings and lectures where this dimension of Shankara's rationale is brought out and considered. One must wonder therefore, about the depth of his scholarship in Shankara's commentaries. Modern commentators, following Vivekananda, and upholding anubhava as the ultimate pramāṇa of brahmajñāna in Shankara, seem, on the whole, to have missed the significance of this logical interdependence between śabda and brahman. It is also most revealing to note that one of the main sources of contradictions, and a principal weakness in Vivekananda's attempt to replace the authority of the śruti with alternative means for the attainment of brahmajñāna, is precisely his failure to demonstrate a logical relationship between pramāṇa (means of knowledge) and prameya (object to be known).

The case for śabda or the word as the only appropriate vehicle of brahmajñāna consists also of showing why this knowledge cannot be attained through other ways of knowing,

and this Shankara convincingly does at every available opportunity in his commentaries. Brahman cannot be known through sense perception because It is nirguna (quality-less). It is free from all the qualities (form, taste, smell, touch and sound) through which the various sense organs apprehend their respective objects. In addition, the sense organs can only know the nature of things by objectifying them. Brahman, being the Knower, the Awareness in the sense organs, can never become the object of their knowledge. It can never be the object of any organ or kind of perception. This is one of the major inconsistencies of Vivekananda's use of the analogy of perception to describe the gain of brahmajñāna in samādhi. Even if it is superconscious rather than ordinary perception, Vivekananda still posits the mind as the organ of knowledge and ends up postulating brahman as an object. To claim any kind of experience as the means through which the knowledge of brahman can be gained requires proof that this is possible without presupposing brahman as an object. Vivekananda has failed to offer any such proof.

The impossibility of knowing brahman through any of the senses means that the other four pramāṇas (inference, comparison, postulation, and non-cognition), dependent as they are on sense perception for their data, cannot either afford any conclusive knowledge of brahman. It is Shankara's often-stated view that independent reasoning cannot establish anything final about the nature of brahman. The summation therefore, is that if brahman is to be known it can only be through an authoritative source of knowledge

consisting of words (śabda). This, affirms Shankara, is what the Upanishads are, and what they declare themselves to be. This dimension of Shankara's rationale for the śruti as the pramāṇa of brahman, although it goes beyond the simple dogmatic assertions about the eternity of the Vedas, will still have little appeal for the sceptic who doubts even the existence of brahman. This fact, however, does not invalidate the reasoning behind it, and one imagines that it is intended for someone who accepts the existence of brahman but has doubts about the appropriate means of knowledge.

The aspect of Shankara's rationale which we are emphasizing at this point is that given the nature of brahman, śruti, as a means of knowledge consisting of words, is the only logical and credible pramāṇa. The other important and complementary dimension of this rationale is that given the nature of brahman and the fact that the fundamental human problem is one of avidyā (ignorance), the knowledge derived from the words of the śruti is a fully adequate solution. For Shankara therefore, śruti as a pramāṇa is both logical and adequate. Shankara's view that the knowledge derived from the words of the śruti is sufficient for the immediate gain of moksha contrasts radically with the position of Vivekananda. Vivekananda repeatedly affirms that śruti-derived knowledge is inconclusive and in need of further verification. He argues for anubhava as the additional pramāṇa needed for verifying the claims of the śruti. Modern commentators, influenced by Vivekananda, argue that Shankara himself posits anubhava as the ultimate

pramāṇa which certifies the provisional statements of the śruti. This view not only falsifies Shankara's epistemology, but also misses the substance of his assertion that the knowledge afforded through words is adequate. It is unfortunate that this significance has not been apprehended even by scholars such as de Smet and K.S. Murty who have treated Shankara's exegesis in some detail.[5]

Shankara's arguments for the logic of words (śabda) as the pramāna of brahmajñāna centre on the nature of brahman. His arguments for the adequacy of śabda also derive from the same fact. The gist of these arguments is that śruti is not required to reveal brahman in the sense of demonstrating Its existence. As Awareness, the content and basis of the "I" notion, brahman is self-revealing and always manifest. Because brahman, as the Self, is self-illumining, no one doubts his or her own existence. While no human being is unaware of the existence of the Self, Its true nature remains unknown. The consequence of this ignorance (avidyā) is that the limited attributes of the body and mind are wrongfully superimposed on the Self. The task of the śruti therefore is not the revelation or production of an unknown entity, but the imparting of correct knowledge about a Self which is misunderstood. This is all that is required. In Shankara, the śruti, rather than being subservient to the authority of an experience, interprets and corrects the meaning of experience. This suggests that our experiences do not necessarily give rise to right knowledge, and that, in relation to the knowledge of brahman, they do not provide a valid self-

interpretation.

It is clear that as far as Shankara is concerned, valid knowledge (pramā) is attained only by the application of a valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa), and he nowhere posits an experience as a spontaneous source of brahmajñāna. This is in contrast to Vivekananda's claim that the samādhi-experience is a self-valid source of brahmajñāna. We cannot therefore, emphasize strongly enough the misleading nature of the common contemporary tendency to classify Shankara's Advaita as a form of mysticism on the basis that he posits a special experience as the source of ultimate knowledge. Human experiences, in the widest sense, may be employed in a secondary manner to support and clarify the propositions of the śruti and this is what Shankara does in his commentaries. The experiences of dream and deep sleep, for example, are analyzed by him to elucidate and reinforce śruti revelations about the nature of the Self. This is possible, however, only after the Self is known from the śruti, and these experiences are not affirmed by Shankara to be independent authoritative sources of knowledge.

Knowledge derived from inquiry (jijñāsā) into the meaning of words can be an adequate solution if the problem involved is merely one of ignorance (avidyā). In Advaita, brahman does not have to be attained. As the very Self of every human being, It is already fully accomplished. Actions (karma) which are necessary if one wants to create, modify, purify or reach an object are redundant in the

case of brahman. No actions are required for the attainment of one's own Self, and the problem is only an incorrect apprehension of Its nature. Knowledge is the sufficient solution to a problem of ignorance, and in this case the words of the śruti afford valid knowledge of the Self. Brahmajñāna is fully identified by Shankara with knowledge gained from the śruti. Like the connection between brahman and the means through which it can be known, there is also a logical interrelationship in Shankara between avidyā as the problem and knowledge (jñāna) derived from the words of the śruti as the solution. While Vivekananda accepts this fundamental Advaita proposition of avidyā as the problem, he does not consistently follow its implications in his discussions, and this is a cause of contradictions in the sources of knowledge proposed by him. It is not surprising that when Vivekananda changes the pramāṇa, there is a tendency in him to reformulate the nature of the fundamental problem. We have especially noted this in his karmayoga discussion.

Shankara's argument about the adequacy of knowledge derived from the sentences of the śruti as a solution to a problem of ignorance is underlined by his emphasis on the fruitfulness of these sentences. This is a further point of contrast with Vivekananda, and another element of Shankara's understanding of the śruti overlooked by modern commentators. Śruti, according to Vivekananda, only stimulates the desire for first-hand knowledge, even as a map can excite one's curiosity to see a country. Shankara, on the other hand, reiterates the immediate

fruitfulness of the knowledge derived from the sentences of the śruti. Even as the comprehension of the sentence, "This is a rope, not a snake", can at once eliminate the fear of someone who mistakenly takes a rope for a snake, the knowledge gained from the sentences of the śruti directly removes the ignorance, grief and fear associated with erroneously taking oneself to be the finite body. The fruitfulness of this knowledge, contends Shankara, is apparent in the transformed life of one who appreciates the true nature of the Self.

It is significant and interesting that the argument about the efficacy of the Vedānta-vākyas in eliminating fear and sorrow is a principal one employed by Shankara in responding to the Pūrva-Mīmānsā challenge of the independent authority of these sentences. Pūrva-Mīmānsā, it must be remembered, contend that the Vēdanta-vākyas do not have a purport of their own, but are subservient to sentences enjoining ritual (karma). This is a challenge which Shankara could not answer by a dogmatic assertion about the authority of the Vedas as derived from their eternity, since this is the very basis on which the Vedas are accepted by Pūrva-Mīmānsā. He seeks therefore to demonstrate the authority of these sentences by reference to their independent fruitfulness as a viable solution to the human problem of existential fear and sorrow. In the light of this fact, we wonder whether Shankara, if he were alive today, might not have employed this as a leading argument in his appeal to those, Hindu or non-Hindu, lacking a traditional faith (śraddhā) in the authority of the śruti. Perhaps the argument about

the obvious and immediate fruitfulness of brahmajñāna in the lives of those who have understood and accepted it, might have been combined with the less dogmatic aspects of his rationale. It might have been connected with arguments that the knowledge afforded by the śruti is otherwise unobtainable, that it is reasonable, and that it is neither refuted nor contradicted by what is known through other pramāṇas. In other words, for Shankara, novelty, fruitfulness and non-contradiction might have been sufficient as the leading elements of a contemporary rationale for the śruti.

A further dimension of the contrast between Shankara and Vivekananda centres on Shankara's affirmation that moksha is coincident with the gain of knowledge from the śruti. Here again, modern commentators have failed to grasp the significance of this claim with reference to Shankara's epistemology. Vivekananda treats knowledge derived from the śruti as having a provisional, hypothetical, theoretical or second-hand quality. Modern commentators, following Vivekananda, treat the attainment of brahmajñāna in Shankara as proceeding in three stages. Śravaṇa (listening), the first of these, is described as acquainting us with the teachings of the śruti. In the second stage of manana (reflection), one seeks through reason to remove any doubts about these teachings. At the end of these two stages, however, knowledge still only has a tentative and provisional validity. It is really the final stage of nididhyāsana (translated generally as meditation) which affords an experience through which the claims of the śruti are directly apprehended and verified beyond all doubt. This experience therefore, is presented as the true pramāṇa of brahmajñāna.

We have emphasized strongly in this study that Shankara .oes not distinguish the nature and aims of these three)rocesses in the manner of Vivekananda and modern commentators. 'hey are all intended for the understanding and assimilation)f knowledge derived from the śruti sentences, and not :rom any alternative source. Consistent with his view :hat brahman, as the Self, is immediately available and 'unattained" only because of ignorance, he sees this clear ınderstanding as all that is required. The relationship)btaining between brahman and śruti is one between an existent but incorrectly known entity and the appropriate ıeans of its knowledge. It is not the creation or attainment)f anything new, but the right knowledge of something already there.

Shankara repudiates the need for any action, mental)r physical, beyond the understanding of the śruti-sentences. In this he is very specific about the redundancy of meditation (upāsanā). In view of the indispensable function ascribed by Vivekananda and modern commentators to meditation in the attainment of brahmajñāna, Shankara's lucid distinction between jñāna (knowledge) and meditation (upāsanā) is most revealing. He categorically distinguishes the nature and functions of these two processes. The substance of this distinction is focused on his understanding of meditation (upāsanā) as a mental activity in which the true nature)f the object meditated upon is irrelevant. The object is conceived to be different from its actual nature, and ;ach form of upāsanā has as its aim a hitherto non-existent :esult. This is one important reason why meditation is

classified as a variety of action by Shankara, and not identified with jñāna. Meditation is not envisaged by Shankara as concerned with or as having as its aim the attainment of knowledge corresponding with the exact nature of an object. It is extremely important to note that Shankara condemns the view that after the knowledge of brahman is gained from the śruti, this knowledge must then be meditated upon to produce a further knowledge which is truly valid and capable of eliminating avidyā. This is the function which modern commentators ascribe to nididhyāsana in Shankara. Following Vivekananda, a theory/practice dichotomy is posited in which śruti- derived knowledge is affirmed as theory, and meditation as the practice which leads to a verification of this theory. Shankara's unmistakeable position, however, is that the clear understanding of the nature of brahman from the sentences of the śruti is all that is required. This is the aim of inquiry into the śruti, the significance of which modern commentators who have worked on Shankara's exegesis have overlooked. Even though, in considering Shankara's epistemology, this study has had to cover certain common exegetical grounds with some of these commentators, it differs radically in its understanding of the aim of exegesis in Shankara, and of the status of knowledge gained at the end of it.

Meditation then, in the view of Shankara, has for its aim the creation of a previously non-existent result, and its nature is not to concern itself with true character of objects. Jñāna (knowledge), on the other hand, has

for its aim the proper understanding of the true nature of existing objects. It cannot create or alter these objects, but seeks simply to know them as they are. The indispensable requirement for any kind of jñāna is an appropriate and valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa), capable of revealing the entity as it is. For taste it is the tongue, for sound it is the ear, and for forms it is the eye. Brahman is the ever-manifest Self of every human being, and indeed of everything that exists. As the Self, brahman is already attained, but incorrectly known. The words of the śruti constitute, for Shankara, the valid means of knowing brahman. What is required therefore, is the knowledge of brahman, derived from inquiry into the meanings of these words. This is the attainment of brahmajñāna, and the joyful freedom of moksha.

Vivekananda's widely influential view of the significance of the śruti in Advaita and in Hinduism is not an attempt to build on Shankara's interpretation. There is little continuity with Shankara in respect of the relationship between śruti and brahmajñāna. His reconstruction represents a radical break rather than a continuation. In an age when science, in the enthusiasm and arrogance of its youth, seemed ready to subject all the areas of human knowledge to its criterion and methods, Vivekananda felt that faith in the śruti as the source of brahmajñāna was irrational. He sought to posit a process of attaining brahmajñāna which he felt had satisfied the demands of science. It not only fails to do this, but, in a much wider perspective, his analysis is unsatisfactory and unconvincing. It is

true that faith (śraddhā) in the śruti as a pramaṇā is indispensable for Shankara, but this is not a faith which proscribes all use of human reason.

Today, in Advaita, and more widely in Hinduism, the status of the śruti is ambiguous and contradictory. There is a disposition, noted in many of the studies reviewed in Chapter 1., to assert its authority while simultaneously positing a view which undermines that authority. Hinduism seems, in general, to be embarassed by the authority of the śruti, without proper critical evaluation of the alternative sources of spiritual knowledge set before it. There is a rational justification for śruti as a pramāṇa of brahmajñāna in Shankara, centred on its logicality, its adequacy, and its fruitfulness. Much more positive results would have been achieved by Vivekananda, had he sought to clarify, develop and build upon these arguments. They were neither presented clearly by him, nor refuted.

In view of the many drawbacks of the alternative offered by Vivekananda, there is an urgent need in Advaita and in Hinduism to take a fresh look at the traditional understanding of the śruti as a pramāṇa, and to unfold, clarify and evaluate this understanding. This process needs to be undertaken, even as Shankara did in his time, with reference to contemporary views and concerns. It is a task which calls for a unity between the commitment of both faith and scholarship. The elements of this traditional understanding derived from Pūrva-Mīmānsā need, in particular, to be studied and reinterpreted. Must the concept of the śruti as śabda-pramāṇa be necessarily linked to the

eternity of a language (viz. Sanskrit)? Is the argument for the eternity of a language necessary to show that the śruti is of a non-human origin? In a secular and sceptical age many difficult questions will have to be asked, but as Hinduism will unhesitatingly admit, meaningful answers will never be given or discovered until meaningful questions are asked.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. T.W. Organ, Hinduism (New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1974), pp. 14-16.

2. CW3, p. 117.

3. Ibid., p. 176.

4. I must confess and explain an inability to provide any detailed biographical information on Swami Dayananda. Even though I spent over two years as his student, it is not customary within the Hindu tradition to question a samnyāsin about the details of his life history, and a saṁnyāsin would not normally voluntarily converse on this matter. Identified with a Self which is free from the process of history, a teacher seeks only to draw his student's attention to that Self. Even the Upanishads provide no biographical information on any of its many teachers.

   I do know, however, that Swami Dayananda began his study of Advaita in 1953, and has worked under various well-known teachers such as Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Tarananda and Swami Pranavananda. In addition to his expertise in the Upanishads, Brahma-sūtra and other Vedānta texts, he is a traditional Sanskrit scholar, with a proficiency in the Pānini-sūtras, the essence of Sanskrit grammar. Swami Dayananda became a renunciate in 1962, and since 1968 he has been the executive administrator, director and trustee of multiple religious, educational and cultural organizations in India. From 1972-78, he was the principal instructor at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, a traditional Hindu theological seminary at Bombay, India. It was during this period that I studied under his guidance (1973-75). In recent years he has been extensively travelling in India and abroad, lecturing on various aspects of Advaita.

5. These are the dates generally accepted for Shankara, but there is no unanimity as to their accuracy.

6. See William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (Fontana Library, 1960; reprint ed., Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1979), p. 367.

7. Ninian Smart, "Swami Vivekananda as a Philosopher", in Swami Ghanananda and Dr. Geoffrey Parrinder, eds., Swami Vivekananda in East and West (London: The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 1968), p. 82.

8. Ibid., p. 83.

9. A.L. Basham, "Swami Vivekananda: A Moulder of the Modern World", in Swami Ghanananda and Dr. Geoffrey Parrinder, eds., Swami Vivekananda in East and West, p. 210.

10. Agehananda Bharati, "The Hindu Renaissance and its Apologetic Patterns", Journal of Asian Studies 29 (1970), p. 278.

11. For a comprehensive list of studies on Shankara see K.H. Potter, ed., The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, vol 1: Bibliography (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), pp. 82-124.

12. See K.H. Potter, ed., The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, vol 3: Advaita Vedānta (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), pp. 18-19. Potter provides a useful summary of the opinions expressed on the authenticity of the various works attributed to Shankara.

CHAPTER 1

1. Swami Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962) p. 15.

2. S. Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life (London: Allen and Unwin, 1927; Unwin Paperbacks, 1980), p. 13.

3. C. Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), p. 13. Not all writers, however, accept this use of the word, darśana. Hiriyanna, for instance, uses the word to mean, "philosophic opinion", and sees it as specifying a school of thought. See M. Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy (London: Allen and Unwin, 1932; first Indian reprint ed., Bombay: Allen and Unwin, 1973), p. 182.

4. Radhakrishnan's main discussion of Shankara occurs in his work, Indian Philosophy, 2 vols. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), 2, 445-658. Of all the thinkers treated by Radhakrishnan in the two volumes, Shankara has been accorded the most detailed analysis. Radhakrishnan is himself regarded as an Advaitin, and his exposition of Shankara is in a large measure an attempt to defend Advaita against many common criticisms.

5. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, 2, 494-96.

6. Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life, pp. 14-15. See also, Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India, p. 17.

7. T.M.P. Mahadevan, "The Place of Reason and Revelation in the Philosophy of an Early Advaitin", in Proceedings of the Tenth Philosophical Congress of Philosophy, Amsterdam, August 11-18, 1948 (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1949), p. 248.

8. See M.A. Buch, The Philosophy of Śaṁkara (Baroda: A.G. Widgery, 1921), p. 271.

9. See M.K. Iyer, Advaita Vedānta (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 152-53.

10. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, 2, 518.

11. Mahadevan, "The Place of Reason", p. 248.

12. Y.K. Menon and R.F. Allen, The Pure Principle: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Shankara (Michigan State University Press, 1960), pp. 17-18.

13. See R.P. Singh, The Vedānta of Śaṅkara - a Metaphysics of Value, vol. 1. (Jaipur: Bharat Publishing House, 1949), pp. 202-3.

14. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, 2, 514.

15. Ibid.

16. Mahadevan, "The Place of Reason", p. 249. See also, S.K. Belvalkar, Vedānta Philosophy (Poona: Bilrakunja Publishing House, 1929), p. 14.

17. Menon and Allen, The Pure Principle, p. 18.

18. Iyer, Advaita Vedānta, p. 153.

19. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, 2, 518.

20. Ibid., p. 514.

21. Belvalkar, Vedānta Philosophy, pp. 15-16.

22. Buch, The Philosophy of Śaṁkara, p. 274.

23. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, 2, 510.

24. Ibid., p. 617.

25. Ibid., p. 534. Radhakrishnan's concern to emphasize the mystical origin and foundation of Shankara's conclusions seems to conflict with his equal concern to characterize Advaita as a "purely philosophical scheme". This description, whenever employed, is intended to distinguish it from a theological scheme. The distinction is obviously based on his own view of the respective roles of the theologian and the philosopher, the nature of the two disciplines, and his own interpretation of Shankara's position. In Radhakrishnan's view, the theologian is one who takes his stand on a particular denominational basis. He is identified with a particular religious tradition and his purpose is to systematize, expand and defend the doctrines of his tradition. The philosopher, on the other hand, is not bound by any particular religious tradition which he considers to be true. Religion in general is the province of his investigation. It is interesting to note that this is a quite common description of Advaita employed by many writers, most of whom do not provide any clear definitions of philosophy or theology. See, for example, Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India, p. 293.

26. Prabhavananda, The Spiritual Heritage of India, pp. 293-94. Very revealing of the authority attributed by Prabhavananda to direct experience is the manner in which he treats anubhava as non-different from śruti, or as an additional pramāna. He subjects anubhava to the criteria normally used for certifying a pramāna. He argues that for the experience to be genuine, it must reveal an entity unknowable through any other means, and that the content of its revelation must not be contradicted by any other means of knowledge. See p. 16.

27. Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, p. 289.

28. R.P. Singh, The Vedānta of Śaṅkara, p. 186. The determination of epistemology by experience is, according to Singh, what Shankara means by the concept of vastutantram. We submit, however, that this is a misunderstanding of this concept. In Shankara, the idea of vastutantram as opposed to purushatantram is used to distinguish the entire process of knowledge from the process of activity. The distinction and its significance will be considered subsequently.

29. Ibid., p. 168.

30. S.K. Belvalkar, Vedānta Philosophy, pp. 17-18. One wonders about the validity of Belvalkar's argument for the superiority of experience over reason in ordinary life. It is very common for experience to be corrected and interpreted by reason. Even while seeing a mirage of water, for example, one knows it to be false.

31. N.K. Devaraja, An Introduction to Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge, 2nd ed., rev. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972).

32. Ibid., p. 66.

33. One wonders here whether Devaraja has apprehended the special sense in which the word "object" is used by Shankara in this context. This significant point will be discussed later.

34. Ibid., p. 67.

35. Shankara, quoted in ibid., p. 57.

36. Shankara, quoted in ibid., p. 62. Devaraja, however, refrains from discussing Shankara's reply to this contention. For full discussion, see B.S.B. 2.1. 4-6, pp. 307-15.

37. M. Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, pp. 336-82.

38. Ibid., p. 358.

39. Ibid., pp. 380-81.

40. See M. Hiriyanna, Indian Philosophical Studies (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1957), pp. 48-49.

41. N. Smart, Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), p. 98.

42. Ibid., p. 104. The view that Advaita is essentially non-different from Mahāyāna has been seriously questioned. Devaraja, Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge, pp. 12-22, discusses very central differences of method

and content between the two schools. It is a theme to which he returns throughout his study.

43. N. Smart, Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy, p. 150.

44. Smart, The Yogi and the Devotee (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968). In this work, Smart traces the development of Advaita from a synthesis between the non-Vedic religions (Buddhism, Jainism, Sāmkhya-Yoga) and Vedic religions. The latter contributed the concept of brahman, and the former the idea of Self etc. He traces a similar process in Mahāyāna Buddhism. In both cases, the distinctive element is the higher role assigned to dhyāna as the ultimate means of freedom. This distinguishes it from the theism of Madhava and Ramanuja. Smart's thesis rests upon his presupposition about the place of dhyāna in Shankara. One wonders also whether the differences between Shankara and Ramanuja could be explained as the results of the application of the different techniques of dhyāna and bhakti. Smart reduces his thesis to a mathematical-like formula:

2 dhyāna + 1 bhakti = Absolutism

2 bhakti + 1 dhyāna = Theism

2 dhyāna + 0 bhakti = Non-theistic Pluralism.

See p. 50.

45. R.V. de Smet, "Śaṅkara's Non-Dualism", in R.V. de Smet and J. Neuner, eds., Religious Hinduism (Allahabad: St. Paul Publications, 1964), pp. 52-61.

46. Ibid., p. 55.

47. Ibid., p. 56. This conflict is also very evident in a most recent work of E. Lott. There is a clear statement of Shankara's assertion that knowledge of brahman follows immediately on grasping the meaning of the Vedic statements indicating identity, followed by an affirmation of the finality of intuition. See Eric Lott, Vedantic Approaches to God (London: The Macmillian Press, 1980), p. 169.

48. BR.U. 2.4.5.

49. Jacob Kattackal, Religion and Ethics in Advaita (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), pp. 122-23.

50. Mahadevan, "The Place of Reason", p. 251.

51. Iyer, Advaita Vedānta, p. 174. Also, Menon and Allen, The Pure Principle, pp. 21-22.

52. De Smet, R.V. "The Theological Method of Śaṃkara"

(Ph.D. thesis, Gregorian University, 1953), p. 333.

53. Singh, The Vedānta of Śaṅkara, p. 186. The only difference, according to this writer, between sensuous perception and internal perception is that the latter is also a consciousness of value. Singh's claim that Shankara describes śruti as intuitional perception is based on a misreading of B.S.B. 1.3.28. Shankara's description of śruti as pratyaksa is in relation to his reference to smriti as inference. Smriti is related to śruti as even inference is to direct perception. The former is dependent on the latter for its data and authority. See B.S.B. 1.3.28, p. 210.

54. Singh, The Vedānta of Śaṅkara, p. 197.

55. Iyer, Advaita Vedānta, p. 188.

56. Buch, The Philosophy of Śaṁkara, p. 260.

57. S.N. Dasgupta, Hindu Mysticism (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1927).

58. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

59. Ibid., preface, viii.

60. Ibid., p. 81.

61. R.C. Zaehner, Mysticism Sacred and Profane (Clarendon Press, 1957; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1978). Also Hindu and Muslim Mysticism (London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1960; New York: Schocken Books, 1972). Zaehner arrives at what he considers to be three distinct types of mystical experiences:

    1. Panenhenic Mysticism
    2. Monistic Mysticism
    3. Theistic Mysticism

Under his second category of monistic mysticism, Zaehner includes a variety of mystical experiences, Sāmkhya, Yoga, and Advaita. He does not distinguish between Sāmkhya and Yoga because they are generally combined, Sāmkhya providing the theoretical basis for the practical techniques of Yoga. Sāmkhya is distinct from the panenhenic experience and, in fact, according to Zaehner, marks an advance beyond it because of its clear distinction between nature (prakriti) on the one hand, and the immortal soul (purushà) on the other. Purusha is essentially different from prakriti and the ultimate aim is the complete freedom of the former from the latter.

There is no vision here of the unity of man with nature, and it is the complete opposite of the panenhenic vision. In the experience of oneself as brahman is involved the destruction of all illusory adjuncts and no further participation in them. There is the realization of oneself as "the only true One without a second", and therefore the Advaita experience is also distinguishable from the panenhenic identity with all of nature. Zaehner is very much aware of the deep philosophical gaps between Sāmkhya and Advaita, but includes them both in the category of monistic mysticism because he considers them identical in terms of actual experience. The experience could be interpreted in terms of Sāmkhya as the isolation of one's essential being or in terms of Advaita as the identity of one's being with the ground of the universe, brahman, for in both cases the experience is one of "totally undifferentiated oneness". Zaehner also includes Buddhism in his category of monistic mysticism.

62. Geoffrey Parrinder, Mysticism in the World's Religions (London: Sheldon Press, 1976).

63. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

64. Ibid., p. 32.

65. Ibid., p. 37.

66. For a most recent and typical consideration of Advaita as mysticism, see Kattackal, Religion and Ethics in Advaita, Chs. 1-2. According to Kattackal, the transcendental experience is regarded by Advaita as the true state of jñāna and the major conclusions of Advaita are deducted from the nature of this experience.

CHAPTER 2

1. Advaita Vedānta epistemology borrows a great deal from the orthodox Pūrva-Mīmānsā school. The word Mīmānsā means inquiry and this system undertakes a systematic analysis of the first (pūrva) parts of the Vedas, the mantras (hymns in praise of various deities), the brāhmanas (guide books for the performance of sacrifices), and the āranyakas (philosopical interpretations of the sacrifices). Vedānta is referred to as Uttara-Mīmānsā because its concern is with the analysis of the last (uttara) sections of the Vedas, the Upanishads.

   The sūtras of Jaimini (ca. 200 B.C.) are the earliest work of this system and form its basis. There are over two thousand and five hundred sūtras, discussing one thousand topics. Jaimini's work was commented upon by Śabara Swami (ca. 400A.D.) and his work was further commented upon by Prabhākara and Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, who differ from each other in certain important respects and form the two principal schools of Mīmānsā named after them. Shankara generally follows the Bhātta school, but with considerable differences as will become evident later.

2. For Shankara and his immediate disciples, epistemology and metaphysical issues were treated together. The Vedānta-Paribhāsā of Dharmarāja, a seventeenth century Advaitin, is the first systematic exposition of Advaita epistemology. It is a classic work in the history of Advaita and its study is a must for all serious students of this system. It discusses the pramānas in detail and offers an Advaita interpretation of the nature and validity of knowledge. The Vedānta-Paribhāsā is divided into eight chapters. In the first six chapters, he defines and discusses the six means of knowledge accepted in common by Pūrva-Mīmānsā and Advaita. The seventh chapter is devoted in the main to an analysis of the terms "tat" and "tvam" and the final chapter discusses the nature of moksha and the means of its attainment. Frequent references will be made to this important work in the course of our discussions. See Ch. 1, p. 5.

3. D.M. Datta, Six Ways of Knowing (London: Allen and Unwin, 1932), p. 27.

4. Ibid.

5. BR.U.B. 2.1.20, p. 214.

6. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 34.

7. B.S.B. 1.1.2, pp. 16-17.

8. V.P. Ch. 1, p. 5.

9. Ibid., p. 7.

10. Advaita posits three orders of existence. 1. Absolute (pārāmarthikam) existence belongs to non-dual brahman alone. 2. Empirical (vyāvahārikam) is the objective universe, the independent reality of which endures until brahman, its substratum, is known. 3. Illusory (prātibhāsikam) existence is the false appearance of something where it does not exist, such as the perception of mirage water in the desert. It comes to an end as soon as the obstacles to proper perception are removed and its locus is correctely apprehended. See, V.P. Ch.2, p. 81.

11. B.S.B. intro., p. 4.

12. The word "generally" is used because of the exceptional case of the jīvan-mukta, who, having gained Self-knowledge, continues in the embodied state. It should not be thought that access to information through the pramānas is impossible for him. The difference is that his employment of the instruments of knowledge proceeds from the clear understanding of the distinction between Self and non-Self and is therefore not founded in avidyā. It will be absurd to contend that having gained Self-knowledge, the jīvan-mukta is incapable of any further kind of knowledge because the pramānas, founded in avidyā, cease to be operative. This is why it was important to point out the nature of the relationship between avidyā and the pramānas. The pramānas are operative both in the presence and absence of the notion of superimposition. The Bhagavadgītā beautifully describes the attitued of the jīvan-mukta to the pramānas.

> 'I do nothing at all'; thus would the truth-knower think, steadfast, - though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking, letting go, seizing, opening and closing the eyes, - remembering that the senses move among sense-objects (B.G. 5:8-9).

13. BR.U.B. 4.3.6, p. 425.

14. B.S.B. 2.2.28, pp. 419-20.

15. V.P. Ch.6, pp. 143-49.

16. Some general text books carry brief summaries of this theory. See Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, Ch. 13.

17. V.P. Ch.6, pp. 144-45.

18. Ibid., pp. 146-48.

19. For a brief summary of the Nyāya position see, Devaraja, An Introduction to Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge, pp. 122-26.

20. See Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing, p. 21.

21. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 23. This argument will become even clearer when the nature of scripture as a pramāṇa is subsequently discussed.

22. Ibid., 2.2.31, p. 426.

23. B.G. 13:1-2.

24. Ibid., 9:18.

25. See N.K. Devaraja, An Introduction to Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge, pp. 112-13. Also G.P. Bhatt, Epistemology of the Bhātta School of Pūrva Mīmānsā (Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1962), pp. 51-56.

26. B.G.B. 18:50, pp. 488-49.

27. PR.U.B. 6.2, p. 487.

28. The schools of Indian philosophy have defined the nature and number of the pramānas differently and a discussion of considerable sophistication and detail has developed concerning each one. It is neither possible nor relevant for us to attempt a detailed and comparative treatment of each pramāna. Our concern here is primarily with śabda-pramāna and our purposes will be served by a general outline of the nature and function of each one. A few references will be made to other schools where they highlight the Advaita definition. For a detailed comparative treatment and attempt to vindicate the six pramanas, see Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing.

29. V.P. Ch. 1, p. 66.

30. Ibid., p. 12.

31. T.B. pp. 17-22.

32. The five organs of action (karmendriyas) evolve from the rajas aspect of the five elements. The organ of speech is born from the rajas aspect of space, the hands from the rajas aspect of air, the legs from the rajas aspect of fire, the genitals from the rajas aspect of water, and the anus from the rajas aspect of earth. From the total rajas aspect of these five elements is evolved the five prānas. The tamas aspect of the five elements, by undergoing the process of grossification, evolve into the five gross elements. The first stage in this process is the division of each element into two equal halves. One half of each element remains intact, while the

other half divides into four equal parts. In the final stage, the intact half combines with one part of each of the other four elements and the process if completed. From these grossified elements, the visible physical body is formed.

33. BR.U.B. 2.4.11, p. 254.

34. Ibid., 1.5.3, p. 148. It should be noted that terms such as manas and buddhi, which strictly speaking denote functions of the antahkarana, are sometimes used by Shankara to denote the entire organ. Manas is that mode (vritti) of the antahkarana characterized by doubt and indecision, while buddhi indicates the function of decision and determination.

35. Ibid.

36. B.S.B. 2.3.32, p. 493.

37. The ātman and the antahkarana are entirely distinct. Like the sense objects, the states of the mind are knowable and the antahkarana stands in relation to the ātman as known and Knower. Being composed of the subtlest substance, the antahkarana easily reflects the Light that is the Self. Through the contact with the antahkarana, the sense organs receive Consciousness and through these It is transmitted to the physical body. The Self thus successively illumines the aggregate of body and organs. See, BR.U.B. 4.3.7, p. 428.

38. Two of the organs, the senses of seeing and hearing, reach out to their objects, while the organs of touch, taste and smell generate cognitions while abiding in their locations. See, V.P. Ch.1, p. 66. For an argument in favour of this view see, D.M. Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing, pp. 39-71. Datta tries to show it as a more favourable explanation of perception than other available theories.

39. B.S.B. 2.2.13, p. 391.

40. V.P. Ch.1, pp. 32-33.

41. We shall be looking at the Advaita interpretation of "tat tvam asi" as non-relational knowledge, in greater detail later on.

42. BR.U.B. 1.4.10, p. 103; 5.14.4, p. 592.

43. "Invariable concomitance is co-existence with the thing to be inferred that must abide in all substrata of the reason" (V.P. Ch. 2, p. 73).

44. There is a broad consensus among Indian schools of philosophy about the general principles of inference, but important differences as regards its particulars. While vyāpti, for instance, is accepted as the essential

element of anumāna, there is disagreement about its ascertainment. Nyāya as one would expect, has taken the lead in the methodic study of this source of knowledge.

45. V.P. Ch. 2, p. 73.

46. Ibid., p. 74. Advaita sees negative invariable concomitance as a case of postulation.

47. BR.U.B. 4.3.7, p. 436, 433; B.S.B. 2.3.26, p. 485.

48. V.P. Ch. 2, p. 76. Shankara himself is usually satisfied with stating the first two stages and occasionally adding the example.

49. V.P. Ch. 3, p. 83.

50. Ibid., p. 85.

51. "It is the assumption of an explanatory fact (upapādaka) from a knowledge of the thing to be explained (upapādya)" (V.P. Ch. 5, p. 117).

52. Ibid., p. 119.

53. CH.U.B. 7.1.3, p. 369.

54. V.P. Ch. 5, p. 120.

55. Ibid., p. 122.

56. See D.M. Datta, Six Ways of Knowing, pp. 236-37.

57. V.P. Ch.5, p. 124.

58. See, for example, BR.U.B. 3.3.1, pp. 311-19; B.G.B. 18:67, p. 517.

59. V.P. Ch. 6.

60. This view of Advaita contrasts strongly with the Nyāya argument that non-existence is available for sense perception. According to Nyāya, each sense organ can perceive the existence as well as the non-existence of its respective object. It argues that the non-existence of an object in a particular locus is related to the locus as an attribute. The room, for example, has as its attribute the non-existence of the table. Because of this relation, the perception of the floor leads to the perception of the non-existence of the table through a special contact between the organ of vision and the non-existence of the table. Advaita argues, however, that in no case can the sense organ come in contact with any kind of non-existence. See V.P. Ch. 6, p. 133.

61. "Only a non-apprehension that is possessed of capacity is (to be regarded as) the instrument of an apprehension of non-existence" (V.P. Ch. 6, p. 126). See also pp. 127-28.

62. Ibid., pp. 137-42.

63. Ibid., p. 138. There is a difference of opinion here between Advaita and Nyāya. In the latter view, non-existence as destruction has a beginning but no end. In the view of Advaita, brahman alone is without beginning and end.

64. Śabda-pramāna can be viewed in two ways. It can be seen as inclusive of all knowledge, secular and sacred, transmitted through langauge. It can also be seen as referring specifically to the Vedas as a unique form of śabda-pramāna. It is with the analysis and understanding of śabda-pramāna in the latter sense that Advaita is primarily concerned. There are important differences between the understanding of the concept in the general and specific senses. In the former sense, for example, śabda is of human origin (paurusheya), while in the latter sense it is of non-human origin (apaurusheya). These terms will be considered in more detail later. In the discussion which immediately follows, śabda is treated in the general sense.

65. Śabda-pramāna is commonly translated as "testimony" or "authority". We find, however, as we hope to demonstrate, that neither of these two terms reflect the complexity of the concept. It is difficult to find a simple expression which accurately communicates the notion. We have chosen therefore, to leave the expression untranslated.

66. It is neither possible nor relevant to review all of the linguistic speculations which have occurred in the history of Advaita thought. We have selected therefore, those which shed light on the Advaita understanding of śruti as śabda-pramāna.

67. See B.S.B. 1.3.28.

68. Ibid., p. 212

69. The word sphota is derived from sphut - to express. It can mean either that which is expressed by the sound series, or that which expresses the meaning.

70. It was earlier indicated that there is a sphota corresponding to each word and sentence. According to the sphota advocates, however, it is ultimately one and identical with brahman. The plurality of the sphota, as revealed by different words, is a fact of the empirical sphere only. There is a parallel here, of course, with brahman's non-duality and Its apparent diversity.

71. B.S.B. 1.3.28, pp. 215-16.

72. V.P. Ch.4, p. 86.

73. It is conceivable that a single word can comprise a sentence, if the other words are implicit from the context.

74. V.P. Ch. 4, p. 86.

75. Ibid., p. 87.

76. Ibid., p. 91.

77. Ibid., p. 92.

78. Ibid., p. 107.

79. We shall discuss later the concept of tātparya with reference to its importance in scriptural exegesis.

80. The Upanishadic sentence, "tat tvam asi", is also seen as an example of an akhaṇḍārthakam vākyam.

81. See V.P. Ch. 4, pp. 93-106.

82. Ibid., p. 93. The primary meaning is referred to as mukhyārtha, śakyārtha, abhidheyārtha, or vācyārtha. See also, BR.U.B. 3.4.1, p. 325.

83. V.P. Ch. 4, p. 96. Secondary meaning is referred to as lakshyārtha.

84. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

85. Ibid., p. 98.

86. The term jahallakshanā is composed of jahad and lakshanā. Jahad is the present participle of the root hā, meaning to remove or abandon.

87. Jahadajahallakshanā, also referred to as bhāgalakshaṇā, is for our purposes the most significant kind of implication. It is this method which is used in the exegesis of "tat tvam asi".

88. V.P. Ch. 4, p. 102.

89. B.S.B. 1.4.11, p. 264.

90. See ibid., 3.3.9, p. 660; 4.1.6, p. 829.

91. This argument is central to the claim that brahman can be known from śruti as śabda-pramāṇa.

92. See, D.M. Datta, Six Ways of Knowing, pp. 330-32. Datta's work provides many useful insights, but its main limitation is that it discusses śabda-pramāṇa

and its associated theories with little or no reference to the justification of śruti as a pramāna. It is apparent that most of the Advaita arguments evolved with this concern in mind and their rationale can only be understood in this context.

CHAPTER 3

1. This does not contradict our previous argument that the nature and method of śabda-pramāna distinguishes it as an independent source of knowledge.

2. Some Advaitins, however, argue that even in the empirical world, śabda-pramāna alone can inform us of another person's thoughts and emotions.

3. The Vedas are collectively referred to as śruti (lit. that which is heard). This term suggests the oral transmission of knowledge in a succession of teachers and students. It is suggested that the reason for the oral transmission of Vedic knowledge was the absence of a written script at the time when the Vedas were composed. It appears that even long after writing was introduced, there was a clear preference for the oral transmission of scripture, and religious learning through the written word was looked down upon. Perhaps it was felt that the oral transmission of a tradition was a far better way of ensuring its living continuity. Vedic words had to be handed down exactly as they had been heard, and correct sounds and pronunciation became all-important. Continuous repetition became the mode of learning, and śravana (listening), the first procedure in assimilating knowledge. See William Cenker, "The Paṇḍit: The Embodiment of Oral Tradition", Journal of Dharma, 5 (1980), pp. 237-51.

4. B.G.B. intro., pp. 2-3.

5. B.G. 4:7-8.

6. Ibid., 4:6.

7. Ibid., 4:5.

8. Ibid., 7:26.

9. Ibid., 3:22.

10. Ibid., 3:23-24.

11. B.G.B. intro., p.4.

12. Ibid.

    "Know this by long prostration, by inquiry, by service, those men of wisdom who have realised the truth will teach thee wisdom" (ibid., 4:34).

13. B.G. 4:1-3.

14. B.S.B. 1.1.1, p. 12.

15. Ibid., intro., p. 3.

16. B.G.B. 2:16, pp. 34.37.

17. B.S.B. 1.1.1, p. 12.

18. Ibid., 1.3.28, p. 209.

19. This contrasts with the Nyāya view of universals as real, eternal and independent of their respective particulars, to which they are related by inherence.

20. For a summary of these views see Datta, The Six Ways of Knowing, pp. 259-73.

21. B.S.B. 1.3.28, p. 209.

22. V.P. Ch. 4, p. 94.

23. B.S.B. 1.3.28, p. 209. Pūrva-Mīmānsā deals with this objection by arguing that such words as Vasu refer to unique individuals who are eternal, and thus the connection between them and the words signifying them is eternal. They also contend that gods are birthless, deathless and unembodied. This theory, however, is not acceptable to Shankara. On the evidence of various texts, he argues that gods are also embodied. It is only through extraordinary merit that this status is achieved, and it is, in fact, lost when this merit is exhausted. See, ibid., 1.3.26-27, pp. 204-7.

24. Ibid., 1.3.28, p. 213.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.,

27. Ibid., p. 214.

28. The doctrine of the eternity of the word and its connection with its referent is taken over by Shankara from the Pūrva-Mīmānsā school. See M.S.J. 1.1.5-23, pp. 8-16. Sūtrās 6-11 detail several arguments against the eternity of the word. In sūtras 12-17, Jaimini attempts to refute each argument individually and follows this in sūtras 18-23 with independent arguments for the eternal word. According to Jaimini, the momentary nature of the word is not due to its non-eternity, but is the result of the function of its manifesting agency. Utterance only manifests what is already existing. When we speak of the production of a word, we only indicate its utterance and not its creation anew. Changes in pronunciation are only indicative of changes in tone and not in the word itself. If the uttered word was transient, it would vanish immediately and there would be no possibility of comprehension. We should be reminded

that the intention behind the Mīmānsā view is the justification of the Vedas as a defect-free source of knowledge. The view here seems to be that if the relationship between words and their meanings is fixed by human convention, like everything human, it will be liable to error. The argument therefore, is that this relationship is natural, eternal and free from error.

29. B.S.B. 1.3.29, p. 216.

30. See Ganganatha Jha, The Pūrva-Mīmānsā in its Sources (Benares: Benares Hindu University, 1942), p. 153.

31. M.S.J. 1.1.27, p. 19.

32. Ibid., 1.1.30, p. 20.

33. B.S.B. 1.3.28, p. 211.

34. Ibid., pp. 209-10.

35. Ibid., pp. 210-11.

36. Ibid., 1.3.30, p. 217.

37. Ibid., pp. 217-21.

38. Ibid., pp. 218-19.

39. Ibid., 4.1.4, p. 821. Shankara cites BR.U. 4.3.22, "The Vedas are no Vedas". See also, V.P. Ch.4, p. 113.

40. The attitude of early Mīmānsā writers to God is a matter of some controversy. It is sometimes argued that they did not discuss God because they were primarily concerned with establishing the Vedas as a self-evident, eternal source of knowledge and inquiring into ritual. Jaimini says nothing about God. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, on the other hand, severely criticized theistic arguments for God and an omniscient person and seems to find the concept absurd. It is of interest to note a few of his arguments. It is not proper, he argues, to attribute the creation of a world that is full of pain and suffering to God. Suffering cannot be traced back to merit and demerit which are not existent at the beginning of creation. Compassion cannot be the motive for creation, since there are no beings to whom compassion can be shown. Besides, on this view, the world would be made entirely happy, for there is nothing that could deter the compassionate activity. If it is deterred, He could not be omnipotent. Why should God create? If his activity is purposeless, He is not an intelligent person. If He creates because of His desire for sport (līlā), He cannot be regarded as one who is complete. If the theist is concerned about finding a cause to explain the world process,

karma can be regarded as a sufficient cause. Against the notion of an omniscient person, Kumārila argues that whether a person knows all, can only be verified by someone who is himself omniscient. Logically therefore, there should be many omniscient persons. See Jha, The Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā in its Sources, pp. 47-52.

41. B.S.B. 1.2.2, p. 111.

42. Ibid., 1.1.3, pp. 18-19.

43. "Those that are called the Ṛg-Veda (Yajur-Veda, etc.) are but the exhalation of this great Being" (BR.U. 2.4.10).

44. BR.U.B. 2.4.10, p. 251.

45. B.S.B. 1.3.28, p. 210. See also, B.G.B. 15:15, p. 409. Here also, he interprets authorship in the sense of initiating the regular succession of teaching.

46. "The sacrificers, having acquired fitness to receive the Veda as a result of the earlier performance of good deeds, received it as it had already existed among the ṛsis" (Rig-Veda mantra, quoted in B.S.B. 1.3.29, p. 217). Or, "In the days of yore, the great ṛsis received through austerities, with the permission of the self-born One, the Veda, together with the anecdotes, that had remained withdrawn during dissolution" ibid. See also, 1.3.30, p. 219.

47. V.P. Ch. 4, pp. 115-16.

48. Vācaspati Miśra flourished in the first half of the 9th. century A.D. He occupies a very important place in the history of Advaita thought. His two most important works are Bhāmatī and Tattvasmīkṣā. Bhāmatī is a commentary on a portion of Shaṅkara's commentary on the Brahma-sūtra, while Tattvasmīkṣā is a commentary on the Brahma-siddhi of Maṇḍanamiśra. The first work is supposed to have been named in honour of his wife.

49. Bhāmatī, 1.1.2, pp. 141-42.

50. BR.U.B. intro., 1.1, pp. 1-5.

51. B.S.B. 2.1.6, p. 314.

52. Ibid., 3.1.25, pp. 585-86.

53. Mīmānsā is in full agreement with Shankara on this point, even though they do not agree, as we shall see, that the Vedas are also a pramāna for brahman. The Mīmānsā argument is that although dharma is an object of knowledge, it is not amenable to sense-perception. Perception can only apprehend objects which are in existence at the time and are in contact

with the organs. Dharma, however, is not in existence at the time of perception and has to be brought into being by certain acts. In addition, it has no external or tangible form and cannot be in contact with any of the sense organs. The other pramānas such as inference, presumption, etc. are more or less dependent on perception and are not therefore, applicable. See, M.S.J. 1.1.4, pp. 6-7. Also, Jha, The Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā in its Sources, pp. 175-76.

54. BR.U.B. intro., 1.1, pp. 1-2.

55. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

56. It is very important to note the specific sense in which Shankara is using the concepts of dharma and adharma in this discussion. Here it implies punya (merit) and pāpa (demerit) accruing particularly from the performance and non-performance of recommended ritual activities. Actions are understood as having a twofold result: seen (drishta) and unseen (adrishta). Shankara's contention is that the unique relation between any action and its unseen result can be known only from the Vedas. The adrishta result is conceived of as a subtle, persisting impression that has the potency of bearing good or evil in the course of time.

57. BR.U.B. intro., 1.1, pp. 3-5. Shankara's attribution of an independent authoritative aim to the jñānakānda of the Vedas is perhaps the most important exegetical divergence from Pūrva-Mīmānsā, whose views he adopts on so many other matters. Pūrva-Mīmansā considers only the injunctive statements of the Vedas to be authoritative. All other passages serve as auxiliaries to injuctions. We shall consider the details of this interesting controversy later. For further statements of Shankara on the limitations of the ritual portions of the Vedas see, B.G.B. 2:42-44, p. 61; MU.U.B. 1.2.12, pp. 109-11.

58. BR.U.B. 2.3.6, p. 236.

59. Ibid., 4.4.6, p. 504.
"The ultimate aim of the Upanisads is to teach Self-knowledge" (BR.U.B. 3.5.1, p. 336).

60. The terms brahman and ātman are interchangeable here because of their identity.

61. B.S.B. 1.1.2, p. 17; 1.1.4, p. 22.

62. BR.U.B. 3.9.26, pp. 388-89.

63. See above, Ch. 2.4. pp. 59-60.

64. The other elements, the particular qualities which they manifest, and the organs evolved out of them

are as follows:

Space	Sound	Ear
Air	Touch	Skin
Water	Taste	Tongue
Earth	Smell	Nose

65. "One becomes freed from the jaws of death by knowing that which is soundless, touchless, colourless, undiminishing and also tasteless, eternal, odourless, without beginning and without end, distinct from Mahat, and ever constant" (KA.U. 1.3.15).

66. B.G.B. 13:12, pp. 345-46. Also 2:25, p. 51.

67. "This body, O son of Kunti, is called the Field (Kshetra); that which knoweth it is called the Knower of the Field (Kshetrajña)" (B.G. 13:1).

68. Ibid., 13:17.

69. BR.U.B. 2.4.14, p. 261. Also, KE.U.B. 2.1, pp. 59-60.

70. "It being an established fact that the object and the subject, that are fit to be the contents on the concepts 'I' and 'it' (respectively), and are by nature contradictory as light and darkness cannot logically have any identity, it follows that their attributes can have it still less. Accordingly, the superimposition of the object, referable through the concept 'it', and its attributes on the subject that is conscious by nature and is referable through the concept 'I' (should be impossible), and contrariwise the superimposition of the subject and its attributes on the object should be impossible" (B.S.B, intro., p. 1).

71. AI.U. B. 2.1, pp. 48-49.

72. See above, Ch. 2.4. pp. 63-66.

73. B.S.B. 2.1.6, p. 314.

74. Ibid., 2.1.27, p. 355.

75. Ibid., 2.1.11, p. 322.

76. It should be pointed out that there is no twisting of the text here, for the compound does indeed offer both possibilities of meaning.

77. B.S.B. 1.1.3, pp. 18-20.

78. The possibilities and limitations of reason in relation

to the acquisition of brahmajñāna will be considered later. It must be mentioned that although Shankara dismisses perception, etc. as valid primary sources of the knowledge of brahman, this does not imply that they have absolutely no role in the process of gaining this knowledge. The subsidiary functions which they are assigned will become apparent as we proceed.

79. See, for example, S.K. Mukherjee, "Shankara on the Limits of Empirical Knowledge", in Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 12 (1930-31), 68.

80. KE.U. 2.1-3. For one of Shankara's finest discussions on this paradox, see his full commentary on Part 2 of this Upanishad.

81. BR.U.B. 3.6.1. p. 343.

82. Ibid., p. 344.

83. KE.U.B. 1.3, p. 49. The word āgama literally means, "traditional knowledge". See also, B.G.B. 18:50, p. 487.

84. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, II, 617.

85. N.K. Devaraja, An Introduction to Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge, p. 66.

86. B.S.B. 1.1.1, p. 9. These views of Shankara are to be understood with reference to the theory of svatah-prāmānya-vāda. See above, Ch. 2.3. pp. 50-55.

87. B.S.B. 2.1.1, p. 304.

88. Ibid., 1.1.4, p. 23. The argument here is that the dependence of one pramāna on another leads to infinite regress.

89. Ibid., 2.1.4, p. 307. In support, he cites a well known text, "I ask you of that Being who is to be known only from the Upanisads" (BR.U. 3.9.26).

90. BR.U.B. 1.4.14, p. 123.

91. B.S.B. 2.3.6, p. 453.

92. B.G.B. 13:4, pp. 336-37.

93. BR.U.B. 1.3.1, p. 32. See also, B.S.B. 2.1.1, p. 302, "One cannot surmise the possibility of perceiving supersensuous things without the Vedas".

"Vedic texts are the valid means to us in the matter

of generating knowledge about supersensuous things" (B.S.B. 2.3.32, p. 445).

94. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 92.

95. CH.U.B. 8.12.1, p. 475. This should be seen in the context of our discussion on the criterion of valid knowledge. See above, Ch. 2.1. pp. 45-50.

96. Sureśvara (ca. A.D. 800) is a direct disciple of Shankara and was installed by him in charge of the Math at Sringeri. It was until very recently thought that he was identical with Maṇḍanamiśra, the disciple of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. It is now held, however, that Sureśvara is closer in view to Shankara than Mandana. See E. Deutsch and J.A.B. van Buitenen, A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta, (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1971), pp. 223-24. Sureśvara's chief works are, Naishkarmya-Siddhi and Brihadāranyakopanishad-bhāshya-vārttika.

97. See N.S. 3:34-38, pp. 168-70.

98. Bhāmatī, 1.1.4, pp. 157-60.

99. B.S.B. 2.2.38, p. 436.

100. For a summary of some of the Nyāya arguments about God, see Radhakrishnan, Indian Philsophy, II, 165-73. Also G. Chemparathy, An Indian Rational Theology, (Vienna : De Nobili Research Library, 1972).

101. B.S.B. 1.1.2, p. 17. The Nyāya argument might have difficulty in proving that there is a single creator. On the analogy of common experience, one could argue that complex effects are generally produced by several agents acting in coordination.

102. See ibid., 2.2.37-41, pp. 434-38. We may notice here the parallels in argument with Kumārila Bhaṭṭa.

103. Ibid., 2.2.38, pp. 435-36.

104. Ibid., 2.1.31, pp. 359-60.

105. Perhaps the best examples of this are to be found in those parts of his Brahma-sūtra commentary where he sets out to refute the Sāṃkhya doctrine of the evolution of the world from insentient matter. For example,

> It is not seen in this world that any independent insentient thing that is not guided by some sentient being can produce modifications to serve some special purpose of man; for what is noticed in the world is that houses, palaces, beds, seats, recreation grounds etc., are made by the intelligent engineers and others at the proper time and in

a way suitable for ensuring or avoiding comfort or discomfort. So how can insentient Pradhāna create this universe, which cannot even be mentally conceived of by the intelligent and most far-famed architects, which is seen in the external context to consist of the earth etc. that are fit places for experiencing the results of various works, and in the context of the individual person, of the body and other things having different castes etc., in which the limbs are arranged according to a regular design, and which are the seats for experiencing various fruits of actions? (B.S.B.2.2.1, p. 369).

106. See above, Ch. 1.

107. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, II, 518. Radhakrishnan's views are contrary to the main argument of Shankara for justifying the Vedas. According to Shankara, the Vedas as śabda-pramāna are necessary because the knowledge which they afford is not available through any other means. If this knowledge was available through human faculties, Shankara's argument would not stand.

108. The term includes texts like the Manu Smriti, the Bhagavadgītā, the Purānas and the Mahābhārata. It is also used with reference to the works of other schools such as Nyāya, Vaiśeshika and Yoga.

109. B.S.B. 1.3.28, p. 210.

110. Ibid., 2.1.1, p. 304.

111. Ibid., pp. 303-4.

112. Ibid., 2.1.3, pp. 306-7.

113. B.G.B. 18:19, p. 461.

114. B.S.B. 1.2.25, p. 149. Shankara's conclusions on the respective authority of śruti and smriti are derived from Pūrva-Mīmānsā writers who have discussed this matter in interesting detail. See M.S.J. 1.3.1-6, pp. 55-68. With regard to the smritis composed by Manu and others, Kumārila has proposed five alternatives: (i) That the authors of these texts were entirely mistaken about what they wrote. (ii) That their assertions were derived from personal observation. (iii) That they learnt about what they wrote from others. (iv) That they intentionally made wrong statements to mislead others. (v) That their assertions are based on Vedic injunctions. He advances various arguments for the rejection of all alternatives, except the last. For most of the smriti injunctions, Kumārila says, corroborative Vedic texts are easily found. In the case of texts for which no such corroboration can be found, we must presume that

such Vedic texts were known to the smriti compilers but are now lost along with many others. The basis of this presumption is the fact that the compilers of the smritis had also learnt and studied the Vedas. Kumārila, however, does not accept all smriti literature to be equally authoritative. Only those parts of the smritis which are concerned with dharma have their origin directly in the Vedas. Those that relate to pleasure and pain as experienced in the world are derived from direct perception. Stories, which are encountered from time to time, are meant for praising dharma and condemning adharama. See Jha, Pūrva-Mīmaṁsā in its Sources, pp. 214-18.

115. B.G.B. 18:66, p. 513.

116. Ibid. Also B.S.B. 2.1.12, p. 324.

117. PR.U.B. 6.2, p. 490.

118. BR.U.B. 2.1.20, p. 209. Pūrva-Mīmānsā writers have also considered the question of whether Vedic words and their denotations are the same as those in common use. They have concluded that the words must be the same if Vedic injunctions are to be understood and meaningful. See M.S.J.1.3.30, p. 91. In fact, Pūrva-Mīmānsā accepts that there are cases where the meaning of a Vedic word may have to be sought among non-Aryan people. Such a situation arises if the word used by a non-Aryan is exactly the same as used in the Vedas, but unknown to the Aryan vocabulary. See M.S.J. 1.3.10, p. 74.

119. BR.U.B.2.1.20, p. 209, 217.

120. See, N.S. 3:84-86, pp. 207-8.

121. Ibid., p. 208.

122. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, pp. 81-82. Also N.S. 3:44-45, pp. 173-74.

123. BR.U.B. 2.1.20, pp. 218-19. The general view of Advaita on this point is that the fields of perception and śruti are different. Perception is concerned with the empirical world while śruti discloses absolute reality. Śruti does not deny the empirical validity of perception.

124. "As for the argument that creation after deliberation is seen in the world only in cases of such efficient causes as the potter and others, but not in the case of materials, that is being answered. Any argument from common sense is not applicable here; for this is not a truth to be arrived at from through inference. Rather, it being known from the Vedas (alone), its meaning should conform to Vedic statements" (B.S.B. 1.4.27, p. 296).

125. BR.U.B. 3.3.1, pp. 318-19.

126. B.S.B. 1.4.14, pp. 272-73.

127. Ibid., 1.3.7, p. 166.

128. B.G. 3:17-18.

129. AI.U.B. intro., p. 8. Also, B.G.B. 2:46 and 69. The fact that the brahmajñānī transcends the necessity for the śruti does not in any way detract from its indispensability as a pramāna of brahman. The point is that a pramāna, having successfully given birth to knowledge, is no longer needed for that purpose. Its value is not thereby reduced, nor does it suggest that knowledge is otherwise attainable.

CHAPTER 4

1. "Nor can the scriptures speak about an unknown thing without having recourse to conventional words and their meanings" (BR.U.B. 2.1.20, p. 209).

2. The view that the words of the Vedas are the same as those of conventional usage is accepted even by the orthodox Pūrva-Mīmānsā system. See M.S.J. 1.3.30, p. 91.

3. B.G.B. 13:12, pp. 346-47. Also KE.U.B. 1.3, p. 49.

4. KA.U. 2.2.15. Also B.G. 13:17.

5. B.S.B. intro., pp. 3-4.

6. Ibid., p. 3.

7. Ibid., 1.1.1, p. 11.

8. Ibid., p. 12. Also 2.3.7, p. 455. In the Bhagavadgītā bhāshya a similar argument is made:

> For, the Self is not a thing unknown to anybody at any time, is not a thing to be reached or got rid of or acquired. If the Self be quite unknown, all undertakings intended for the benefit of oneself would have no meaning. It is not, indeed, possible to imagine that they are for the benefit of the physical body or the like which has no consciousness; nor is it possible to imagine that pleasure is for pleasure's sake and pain is for pain's sake. It is, moreover, the Self-knowledge which is the aim of all endeavour. Wherefore, just as there is no need for an external evidence by which to know one's body, so there is no need for an external evidence to know the Self who is even nearer than the body (B.G.B. 18:50, p. 488).

9. B.S.B. 1.1.2, pp. 12-13.

10. Ibid., intro., pp. 1-2.

11. Ibid., p. 6.

12. "Therefore we have only to eliminate what is falsely ascribed to Brahman by avidya; we have to make no more effort to acquire a knowledge of Brahman as He is quite self-evident. Though thus quite self-evident, easily knowable, quite near, and forming the very Self, Brahman appears - to the unenlightened, to those whose reason is carried away by the differentiated phenomena of names and forms created by avidya - as unknown, difficult to know, very remote, as though He were a separate thing. But to those whose reason

has turned away from external phenomena, who have secured the grace of the Guru and attained the serenity of the self (manas), there is nothing else so blissful so well-known, so easily knowable and quite so near as Brahman" (B.G.B. 18;50, p. 487). Also 2:18, p. 39.

13. Shankara does not absolutely dismiss the value of karma in the pursuit of freedom. The role which he assigns to it will be considered later.

14. B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 32-34. Also TA.U.B. 1.11.4, p. 286.

15. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 32.

16. Ibid. The idea here is that brahman is free from all qualities and unconnected with anything.

17. Ibid., pp. 32-33.

18. See BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 83. Also TA.U.B. 2.1.1, p. 300.

19. Other examples are used by Shankara to illustrate the idea of a notional loss. A prince, discarded by his parents soon after his birth, grew up in a fowler's home. Not aware of his princely identity, he took himself to be a fowler and identified with that role. When told by a compassionate man of his royal descent, he immediately gave up his mistaken identity and assumed his rightful royal status. (BR.U.B. 2.1.20, pp. 210-11). Another common example used by Advaita teachers is the story of a necklace wearer, who somehow thinks that he has lost the necklace which is all the time around his neck.

20. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 96.

21. The word dharma in this context indicates any action, ritualistic or otherwise, which results in the production of merit (punya) and leads to enjoyment in this or in other worlds.

22. M.S.J. 1.1.2, p. 3.

23. Ibid., 1.2.1, p. 22.

24. Ibid., 1.2.7, p. 26. A sentence which subserves an injunction by praising the act or its result is termed an arthavāda.

25. For example, it is argued that a sentence such as, "Vāyu is a swift deity", is purposeless by itself. When, however, it is seen in relation to the injunction, "One who wants prosperity should touch a goat relating to Vāyu", it serves as a praise of the deity and a recommendation of the ritual.

26. See M.S.J. 1.1. 4-6, pp. 6-7. The argument here is that dharma is not amenable to any other pramāna because it has no external or tangible form. It also has to be brought into existence by prescribed acts. Vedic injunctions are the only source of its knowledge. We should remind ourselves that Shankara accepts the Vedas as the authoritative pramāna for dharma.

27. There is a linguistic dimension to the Mīmānsā argument that the central concern of the Vedas is the initiation of activity through injunctive statements. They hold the view that in all sentences, words derive their meaningfulness only from their relationship with the verb. The pivot of any sentence is the verb, and all usage is thus meant for instituting action. A factual statement therefore, is never an end in itself, but has its reference in some activity. See M.S.J.1.1.25. p. 18.

28. B.S.B. 1.3.33, p. 225.

29. BR.U.B. 1.3.1, p. 33.

30. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 22.

31. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 92.

32. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 25.

33. Ibid., pp. 39-40. Also BR.U.B. 1.4.7, pp. 92-93 and 1.4.10, p. 103.

34. "For it is the very nature of the negative to convey the idea of the non-existence of the action with which it gets connected. The idea of non-existence causes inactivity, and that idea ceases to exist automatically like fire that has exhausted its fuel" (B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 38-39). Also BR.U.B. 1.3.1, pp. 34-35.

35. TA.U.B. 1.11.4, p. 290. Also B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 22-23. Shankara does not deny that there are some Vedic texts which subserve injunctions. He maintains, however, that this is not the case with Vedānta-vākyas which have their own result.

36. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 22.

37. For good definitions of the sixfold criteria, see, Sadānanada's Vedāntasāra, Ch. 5. There is little information on Sadānanda's (ca. 1450 A.D.) life. It is not known whether he wrote any work other than the Vedāntasāra. The text itself systematically presents the main doctrines of Advaita. It is held in high esteem and widely studied by students of Advaita.

38. The nature of the reasoning process acceptable to Advaita is discussed in detail later.

39. The desirable ends attainable by adopting the means prescribed in the karmakānda are sometimes classified as dharma, artha (wealth), and kāma (pleasure). These three human goals (purushārthas) are also referred to as pravritti-dharma (the way of Works).

40. The jñānakānda is also, of course, collectively referred to as Vedānta. The word Vedānta (Veda + anta (end)) literally means the end of the Vedas (i.e. the Upanishads) The purushārtha of this section is moksha, also referred to as nivritti dharma (the way of Renunciation).

41. B.S.B. 1.1.1, pp. 6-13.

42. MU.U. 1.2.12.

43. See B.G.B. intro., pp. 2-3.

44. BR.U.B. 5.1.1, pp. 560-61.

45. Ibid., 2.1.20, p. 216.

46. Ibid., pp. 216-17.

47. It is clear that Shankara denies the reality of actions and results, etc. only from the absolute standpoint (paramārtha). This is the standpoint of brahmajñāna. Their empirical (vyavahāra) reality is not denied. The term prātibhāsika describes the illusory, such as the rope mistaken for a snake. Dream experiences also come under this category. The universe enjoys a vyavahāra status.

48. BR.U.B. 2.1.20, p. 217. Also 4.5.15, pp. 549-51.

49. See above, Ch. 3.3, pp. 107-9.

50. KE.U.B. 1.4, pp. 51-52.

    "Knowledge alone which is imparted by those who have realised the truth - and no other knowledge - can prove effective" (B.G.B. 4:34, p. 149).

51. KA.U.B. 1.2.7-9, pp. 137-40.

52. CH.U. 6.14.1-2. See also Shankara's bhāshya on same.

53. MU.U. 1.2.12. The qualification of brahmanishtham emphasizes the necessity of jñāna becoming an assimilated and integrated part of his outlook. Shankara's repeated demand for scriptural mastery does not find echo in modern interpretations of Advaita. This is directly related to the different perceptions of the role of the Vedas in the acquisition of brahmajñāna.

54. Ibid., 1.2.13. Also Shankara's bhāshya.

55. B.S.B. 1.1.8, p. 57. A similar illustration is also explained by Shankara in CH.U.B. 8.12.1, p. 472.

56. The method is also mentioned by Sadānanda in V.S. 1:31.

57. B.G. 13:12.

58. See Shankara's commentary on ibid.

59. The word sat is often used to describe brahman. It is interesting to note here the very ordinary sense in which he understands the term.

60. B.G. 13:13.

61. Ibid., 13:14.

62. See IS.U. 2.4-5; KA.U. 1.2.20; KE.U. 1.4-9; 2.2.

63. In Advaita, definitions through non-essential characteristics (upādhis) are referred to as taṭasthalakshana. The non-essential attributes are referred to as upalakshana. Definitions which focus on the essential nature of the object are referred to as svarūpalakshaṇa. These will be discussed shortly.

64. TA.U. 3.1.1.

65. KE.U. 1.6.

66. "As a spider spreads out and withdraws (its thread), as on the earth grow the herbs (and trees), and as from the living man issues out hair on the head and body, so out of the Immutable does the universe emerge" (MU.U. 1.1.7).

67. MU.U. 1.1.6.

68. KA.U. 1.3.15; 2.1.2; Also PR.U. 4.9; IS.U. 6.8.

69. KA.U. 1.2.14.

70. BR.U. 3.8.8.

71. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 95.

72. Ibid., 2.3.6, p. 239.

73. We have already discussed the various kinds of implication and the conditions which necessitated their employment. See above, Ch. 2.4, pp. 80-82.

74. TA.U. 2.1.1.

75. The following discussion is based largely on Shankara's

commentary on this definition. See, TA.U.B. 2.1.1, pp. 299-319.

76. Shankara goes on to deny the idea that this text suggests that the ātman can know Itself. The Self, he argues, is without parts and cannot simultaneously be both Knower and known. If the Self became a knowable, there will be no Knower. Moreover, if the ātman is in any way cognizable, scriptural instruction about It will become useless, even as instruction about a pot. See ibid., pp. 305-6.

77. TA.U.B. 2.1.1, pp. 309-10.

78. The reason is that brahman is free from all attributes through which words directly signify objects.

79. TA.U.B. 2.1.1, p. 310.

80. CH.U.B. 7.1.3, p. 370.

81. BR.U.B. 4.3.32, pp. 475-76. Also CH.U.B. 7.23.1, p. 402.

82. BR.U.B. 3.9.28.7, pp. 395-96.

83. Also referred to as bhāgalakshaṇā. See above, Ch. 2.4, pp. 80-82.

84. B.S.B. 3.2.22, pp. 625-26. See full commentary on this sūtra.

85. These mahāvākyas are generally considered to be four in number, one from each of the four Vedas:

    (i) "That Thou Art (tat tvam asi)" (CH.U. 6.8.7) of the Sāma-Veda.

    (ii) "Consciousness is brahman (prajñānam brahma)" (AI.U. 3.1.3) of the Rig-Veda

    (iii) "I am brahman (aham brahmāsmi)" (BR.U. 1.4.10) of the Yajur-Veda.

    (iv) "This ātman is brahman (ayam ātmā brahma)" (MA.U.2) of the Atharva-Veda.

86. The mahāvākya is then repeated nine times during the course of the instruction. Shankara, however, only comments elaborately on CH.U. 6.16.3, and 6.8.7.

87. CH.U.B. 6.8.7, p. 339. Se entire bhāshya on this verse.

88. Ibid., 6.16.3, p. 361.

89. Ibid., p. 362.

90. "We hold that the scriptures aim at establishing the identity of the transmigrating soul with God Himself by removing from the soul all vestiges of transmigration. From this point of view it becomes affirmed that God is possessed of the characteristics of being untouched by sins etc., and that the opposite characteristics of the soul are unreal" (B.S.B. 4.1.3, p. 820.

91. See above, Ch. 2.4, pp. 81-82.

92. See, V.S. 4: 144-47.

93. CH.U.B. 6.16.3, pp. 363-64.

CHAPTER 5

1. For the basis of the discussion below on this distinction, see B.S.B. 1.1.2, pp. 16-18.

2. BR.U.B. 5.1.1, pp. 558-59. One of the very important reasons for emphasizing the distinction between jñāna and karma is that if jñāna is classified as an activity, moksa will become the result of an action, and therefore, non-eternal.

3. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 34.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 35.

7. Ibid., p. 31.

8. The root meaning of upāsanā is to sit by the side of.

9. BR.U.B. 1.3.9, p. 45.

   "Meditation consists in a current of uniform concepts, not interspersed with dissimilar ones, which proceeds according to the scriptures and relates to an object enjoined in the scriptures" (TA.U.B. 1.3.4, p. 247).

   "Upāsanā consists in setting up a current of similar thoughts" (B.S.B. 4.1.7, p. 831).

10. See B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 29-30.

11. See BR.U. 3.1.9.

12. BR.U.B. 1.5.2, pp. 144-45.

13. For another example of adhyāsā upāsanā, see BR.U.B. 1.1.1, p. 6.

14. B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 30-31. Also BR.U.B. 1.4.10, pp. 105-6.

15. For example, "When that Self, which is both high and low, is realised, the knot of the heart gets untied, all doubts become solved, and all one's actions become dissipated" (MU.U.2.2.8).

16. Each meditation has its own distinctive result. See BR.U.B. 2.1.14, p. 186.

17. B.S.B. 1.1.1, pp. 8-9.

18. See CH.U.B. intro., 1.1, p. 4, and TA.U.B. 1.11.4, pp. 291-92. The prerequisites of jñāna will be considered in detail later.

19. See B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 28-29. Shankara himself cites the following texts in support of the simultaneity of jñāna and moksha: "Anyone who knows Brahman becomes Brahman" (MU.U. 3.2.19). "When that Brahman, the basis of all causes and effects, becomes known, all the results of his (i.e. aspirant's) actions become exhausted" (MU.U. 2.2.8).

"One who knows the Bliss (that is the very nature) of Brahman ceases to have fear from anything" (TA.U. 2.9).

"O Janaka, you have certainly attained (Brahman that is) fearlessness" (BR.U. 4.2.4).

"Then what delusion and what sorrow can there be for that seer of unity?" (IS.U.7).

20. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 28.

21. MU.U.B. 1.15, p. 88.

Also, "This identity of the embodied soul, that is taught, is a self-established truth, and it has not to be accomplished through some extraneous effort. From this it follows that like the idea of the rope removing the ideas of snake etc. (superimposed on it), the acceptance of the unity of the (individual) Self with Brahman, as declared in the scripture, results in the removal of the idea of an individual soul bound up with the body, that is a creation of beginningless ignorance" (B.S.B. 2.1.14, p. 328).

22. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 36. Also BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 93.

23. BR.U.B. 1.4.10, p. 114.

24. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, pp. 87-90.

25. In B.G.B. 13:2, pp. 329-30, a similar pūrvapaksha is formulated as follows:

> The Lord Himself is the Ksetrajna and Ksetra is quite distinct from Ksetrajña who perceives it; but I am a samsarin subject to pleasure and pain. To bring about the cessation of samsara, I should first acquire a discriminative knowledge of Ksetra and Ksetrajna, then attain a direct perception of Ksetrajna, the Lord, by means of dhyana or meditation of the Lord and dwell in the true nature of the Lord".

Shankara says that this is the view of someone who lacks the traditional method of understanding the

śāstra. Such a person, according to Shankara, is "the slayer of the Self. Ignorant in himself, he confounds others, devoid as he is of the traditional key (sampradaya) to the teaching of the sastras. Ignoring what is directly taught, he suggests what is not taught. Therefore, not being acquainted with the traditional interpretation, he is to be neglected as an ignorant man, though learned in all sastras".

26. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 89.

27. Ibid., pp. 90-92. See also, B.S.B. 2.1.4, pp. 331-32.

28. BR.U.B. 4.5.15, pp. 548-49.

29. MU.U. 1.1.4-5, distinguishes between aparā vidyā (lower knowledge), and parā vidyā (higher knowledge). Parā vidyā is described as that by which the Immutable is known.

30. CH.U. 7.1.3. See Shankara's commentary, p. 371.

31. Other terms used for the antahkarana are buddhi, citta and manas.

32. "Among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection; even among those who strive and are perfect, only one perchance knows me in truth" (B.G. 7:3). Also BR.U.B. 4.4.12, p. 512.

33. See BR.U.B. 2.4.1, p. 242 and B.S.B. 3.4.26, p. 783.

34. B.G.B. 15:11, p. 405. Also KA.U.B. 1.2.24, pp. 155-56.

35. MU.U.B. 3.1.8, pp. 155-56. Also KE.U.B. 4.8, pp. 93-94.

36. B.S.B. 1.1.1, pp. 6-9.

37. See above, Ch. 4.2, pp. 140-41.

38. B.S.B. 1.1.1, p. 9.

39. The nature of the arguments employed in these discussions is discussed subsequently.

40. See, for example, KA.U. 1.3.4-9; 1.3.12-14.

41. See ibid., 1.1.1-29.

42. Ibid., 1.1.26-27.

43. MU.U.B. 1.2.12, p. 110.

44. B.G. 9:21. Also 2:42-44 and KA.U. 1.2.10.

45. See KA.U. 1.2.1-2, and Shankara's commentary.

46. For brief definitions of all prerequisites, see V.S. 1: 15-26.

47. B.G.B. 6:26. Also 6:34-35; 2:62-64.

48. Ibid., 2:54.

49. KA.U. 2.1.1-2.

50. Ibid., 1.3.3-9.

51. V.S. 1:21.

52. B.G. 2:14-15.

53. CH.U.B. 6.12.2, pp. 347-48. Also 4.1.1, p. 176; 4.10. 2, p. 199; B.G.B. 4;39, pp. 151-52. 9;3, pp. 240-41.

54. For another detailed enumeration of qualities conducive to brahmajñāna, see B.G. 13:7-11.

55. See MU.U.B. 1.2.13, pp. 111-12, and B.G.B. 18:67, pp. 516-17.

56. B.G. 3:34.

57. Ibid., 5:3.

58. Ibid., 2:57.

59. Ibid., 2:64. See also, 12:17; 14:22: 18:10.

60. B.G.B. 8:27, pp. 219-20.

61. "Thy concern is with action alone, never with results. Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be for inaction" (B.G. 2:47).

62. B.G.B. 5:8, p. 165. Also 5:11-12.

63. Ibid., 18:9, p. 450.

64. Ibid., intro., pp. 5-6. See also, 2:46-50; 2:59; 3:4-5; 3:8-9; 3:30; 18:3-11; BR.U.B. 3.3.1, p. 318; 4.4.22, p. 523; B.S.B. 4.1.18, p. 845; TA.U.B. 1.11.4, pp. 291-92.

65. B.G.B. 3:18-19, p. 104.

66. Ibid., 5: intro., pp. 154-59.

67. Ibid., 3:20-29, pp. 104-9.

68. See BR.U. 2.4.5, and 4.5.6.

69. See B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 34-36.

70. See above, Ch.5.1.

71. B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 35.

72. Ibid., 3.2.21, p. 622. See also, 1.1.4, pp. 35-36.

73. Shankara proposes for refutation the view that manana and nididhyāsana are enjoined as actions after śravaṇa. See B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 25.

74. B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 43-44.

75. V.S. 5:182.

> "Hearing is a mental activity leading to the conviction that the Vedāntic texts inculcate only Brahman, the One without a second" (V.P. Ch. 8, p. 213).

76. KE.U. 1.5-7.

77. See BR.U.B. 1.4.10, p. 107;

> "The man who knows not the Self is ruined, as also the man who has no faith in the teachings and the words of his Guru, and the man who is full of doubts. No doubt the ignorant and the faithless are ruined, but not to the same extent as a man of doubting mind. He is the most sinful of all. - How? - Even this world which is common to all men is not won by a sceptic, nor the other world, nor happiness: for even these things come within the sweep of his doubt" (B.G.B. 4:40, p. 152).

78. V.S. 5:191.

> "Reflection is a mental operation producing ratiocinative knowledge that leads to the refutation of any possible contradiction from other sources of knowledge regarding the meaning established by scriptural testimony" (V.P. Ch. 8, p. 213).

79. For the basis of the discussion below, see, B.S.B. 2.1.11, pp. 320-23.

80. Kapila is the reputed founder of the Sāmkhya system of thought, while Kaṇada is supposed to have initiated the Vaiśeshika school. There is no reliable historical evidence on either thinkers.

81. B.S.B. 2.1.11, pp. 322-23. For related arguments, see BR.U.B. 1.4.6, p. 75, and KA.U.B. 1.2.8, pp. 140-41.

82. For a discussion of these types, see M. Hiriyanna, Indian Philosophical Studies, pp. 45-46.

83. B.S.B. 2.1.6, p. 314.

84. Ibid., 1.1.1, pp. 12-13.

85. Ibid., 1.1.2, p. 15. The two texts cited by Shankara here are, "The Self is to be heard of, to be reflected on" (BR.U. 2.4.5), and, "A man, well-informed and intelligent, can reach the country of the Gandhāras similarly in this world, a man who has a teacher attains knowledge" (CH.U. 4.14.2).

86. BR.U.B. 3.1.1, intro., p. 285.

87. Ibid., 3.8.9, p. 362.

88. See above, Ch. 3.4, pp. 111-15.

89. MA.U.K.B. 3.1, intro., p. 268.

90. Ibid., 4.99, p. 402. It is perhaps important to note that the genuineness of Shankara's commentary on the Kārikā of Gaudapada is under question. For a view on this matter, see Devaraja, An Introduction to Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge, pp. 222-24.

91. TA.U. 2.5.1.

92. B.S.B. 2.1.6, pp. 314-15.

93. For Shankara's detailed analysis of the three states, see MA.U.B. 1-6, pp. 179-90.

94. B.G. 2:13.

95. B.S.B. 1.3.19, p. 193. Also BR.U.B. 2.1.20, p. 212.

96. MU.U. 1.1.7, p. 91.

97. B.S.B. 2.1.14, p. 327; CH.U.B. 6.1.4-6, pp. 293-95.

98. B.G. 13:32; 9:6.

99. B.S.B. 1.3.7, p. 166.

100. Ibid., 3.2.18, p. 615.

101. See ibid., 3.2.19, pp. 615-16.

102. Ibid., 3.2.20, pp. 616-17.

103. Ibid., 2.2.1, pp. 367-68.

104. Ibid.

105. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 89.

106. See B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 23.

107. See BR.U.B. 1.5.3, pp. 147-50; B.S.B. 2.3.31, pp. 492-93; AI.U.B. 3.1.2, pp. 67-70.

108. B.G.B. 2:21, p. 46. There are innumerable references in Shankara to the mental nature of brahmajñāna and the functions of the mind in its production. See B.G.B. 18:50, p. 487; 18:55, p. 493; 18:66, p. 500; BR.U.B. 4.4.19, p. 517; 2.1.1, p. 177; B:S.B. 1.1.4, p. 34; KA.U.B. 1.3.12, p. 169; MU.U.B. 3.1.9, pp. 156-57.

109. The mental modification which destroys avidyā is sometimes conceived as a final thought or vritti, the crystallization of brahmajñāna. As such, it is termed as brahmākāravritti (a thought coinciding with the nature of brahmān), or akhandākāra cittavritti (a mental modification centred on non-duality).

110. B.S.B. 2.1.14, pp. 330-31.

111. Ibid., 4.1.4, pp. 820-21; B.G.B. 2:69, pp. 78-79.

112. In the history of Advaita thought, the prasamkhyāna argument is associated with the name of Maṇḍanamiśra, an elder contemporary of Shankara. His most famous work is the Brahma-siddhi. According to Maṇḍana, the mahāvākyas are incapable, by themselves, of bringing about brahmajñāna. The Vedānta-vākyas convey an indirect knowledge which is made direct only by deep meditation (prasamkhyāna). The latter is a continuous contemplation of the purport of the mahāvākyas. Śravana alone, according to Maṇḍana, is incapable of eliminating the deeply ingrained false impressions of avidyā. Vācaspati, following Maṇḍana, emphasizes the role of deep meditation in producing brahmajñāna. According to Vācaspati, it is the mind, perfected and refined through deep meditation, which is the immediate cause of brahmajñāna. This argument is associated with the Bhāmatī school of Advaita, named after Vācaspati's famous work. For excerpts from the Brahma-siddhi, see K.H. Potter ed., The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, 3, 346-420. Also, E. Deutsch and J.A.B. van Buitenen, A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta, Ch. 10.

113. N.S. 3:124-25.

114. Ibid., 3:90.

115. Ibid., 3:118.

116. Ibid., 3:91.

117. Ibid., 3:117.

118. Ibid.. 2:1-9.

119. Ibid., 3:125-26.

120. Ibid., 1:47-51.

121. V.S. 5:192.

122. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 93. In Advaita, the results of actions are classified in a threefold manner. First of all, there is the sum total of the results of actions done in all previous existences, yet to bear fruit (samcita-karman). Secondly, there are the results of actions presently performed and those likely to be done in the future (āgāmi-karman). These would eventually form part of the samcita-karman. Finally, there are the results of actions which have given rise to and are currently being experienced in this particular birth (prārabdha-karman). Brahmajñāna is seen as immediately destroying samcita-karman. Actions done by the jīvan-mukta after the gain of knowledge are incapable of producing results to be experienced by him, because they are unaccompanied by any sense of doership. Even while acting, he is identified with the actionless Self. The results of actions which have given rise to this particular body, however, are compared by Shankara to an arrow which is already released from the bow. In spite of brahmajñāna, its momentum will continue until naturally exhausted. This is evidenced, according to Shankara, by the fact that there are knowers of brahman who still retain the body after knowledge. The jñānī, however, experiences the results of prārabdha-karman, knowing that the ātman is always free and unaffected. When prārabdha-karman exhausts itself and the body falls, the jīvan-mukta is not reborn. See B.G.B. 4:37, p. 150; 13:23, pp. 362-65; B.S.B. 4.1.13-15, pp. 835-41.

123. The prerequisites of sādhana-catushṭaya are, in fact, intended to create the state of mind in which jñāna can occur and abide uninterruptedly.

124. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, pp. 93-94.

125. Ibid., pp. 90-91.

126. Ibid., p. 87.

127. See also, B.S.B. 1.1.4, p. 43. It is perhaps very significant that Shankara himself does not pursue the detailed distinction between śravana, manana and nididhyāsana, which has characterized later and modern Vedānta.

128. B.S.B. 1.1.4, pp. 34-35. Although nididhyāsana is most commonly translated as "meditation", we think that in order to preserve the clear distinction which Shankara makes between the nature of upāsanā or dhyāna and nididhyāsana, it is more appropriate to render nididhyāsana as "contemplation". "Meditation"

can be reserved for translating upāsanā or dhyāna.

129. It is significant that in the Upanishad (BR.U. 2.4.5 and 4.5.7), the teacher Yājñavalkya, while prescribing śravana, manana and nididhyāsana, substitutes in the next sentence, the word vijñāna (right knowledge or apprehension) for nididhyāsana.

130. B.S.B. 4.1.2, pp. 815-17.

131. Ibid., p. 818.

132. Shankara's refutation is of the classical system of Patañjali (ca. 5th. century A.D.), formulated in the Yoga-sūtra. The word, "yoga" comes from the root yuj to unite, to join or to yoke. Its philosophical and epistemological foundations are to a large extent borrowed from the Sāṃkhya system. It proposes the duality of prakriti and purusha. Purusha is the individual spiritual self. It is pure consciousness, inactive, unattached and self-luminous. Prakriti is the inert material principle which comprises the external universe and the inner world of mental experiences. The problem of the purusha is its identification with the manifestations and qualities of prakriti. This identification is initially with citta, the first evolute of prakriti. It is constituted of the intellect (buddhi), the mind (manas), and the ego-sense (ahaṃkāra). Citta is inert (jaḍa), but because of its subtlety and nearness to purusha, it reflects the purusha, and appears conscious. Purusha wrongly identifies with its reflection in citta, and appears to be active, changing, and subject to pain and pleasure. The aim of Yoga is to effect the freedom of purusha from prakriti by a cessation of the modifications (vrittis) of citta (cittavritti nirodha). By a quelling of the modifications of citta, wrong identification ceases, and purusha realises its distinctness from prakriti. It then abides in its own glory and perfection.

This freedom is brought about by an eightfold system of physical and mental discipline (ashṭāṅga yoga). These steps are as follows: (i) yama (restraint); (ii) niyama (observance); (iii) āsana (posture); (iv) prāṇāyāma (regulation of prāṇa); (v) pratyāhāra (sense withdrawal); (vi) dhāraṇa (concentration); (vii) dhyāna (meditation); (viii) samādhi.

Samādhi, the culmination of Yoga discipline, is said to be of two kinds. In samprajñāta samādhi, consciousness of the object meditated upon still persists. In asamprajñāta samādhi, objective consciousness is entirely absent, and the mind ceases to function. Purusha realises its own nature as isolated from prakriti. See S.N. Dasgupta, Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian

Thought (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1930; reprint ed., 1974).

133. It is very interesting to note the references in the Upanishads which Shankara cites as alluding to Yoga:

"The Self is to be realized - to be heard of, reflected on, and profoundly meditated upon" (BR.U. 2.4.5).

"Holding the body in balance with three limbs (chest, neck, and head) erect" (SV.U. 2.8).

"The holding of the senses and organs unpertubed and under control is called Yoga by adepts" (KA.U. 2.3.11).

"Getting fully this knowledge (of Brahman) and the process of Yoga" (KA.U. 2.3.18).

See B.S.B. 2.1.3, p. 305.

134. B.S.B. 2.1.3, p. 306.

135. Ibid., p. 307. This should be seen in the context of his view that supersensuous things can be known only through the Vedas. See ibid., 2.1.1, p. 302, and 2.3.1, p. 445.

136. Ibid., 1.3.33, pp. 228-29.

137. BR.U.B. 1.4.7, p. 91.

138. Ibid. Also MA.U.K.B. 3:39-40, pp. 316-17.

139. B.S.B. 2.1.1, pp. 302-4.

140. Ibid., p. 302.

141. Ibid. In addition to the other evidence presented, this is also a refutation of personal authority as a basis for the validity of the śruti.

142. B.G.B. 5:26-29, pp. 177-78.

143. B.S.B. 1.1.2, p. 16. For citings of this text, see, for example, Buch, The Philosophy of Śaṁkara, pp. 261-62; Singh, The Vedanta of Śaṅkara, p. 193; Iyer, Advaita Vedānta, p. 155. Hiriyanna, Indian Philosophical Studies, p. 49; Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, 2, 510.

144. The inference suggested here is the Nyāya argument that any purposeful effect must have an intelligent cause. The aim of this pūrvapaksha is to challenge the claim of śruti as the only pramāṇa of brahman.

145. B.S.B. 1.1.2, p. 15.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid., p. 16. Where śruti, for instance, mentions a certain result as the effect of a particular ritual, there is no scope for reinforcing such a connection by resorting to any supplementary pramāna. One is dependent entirely on the authority of the śruti. Even reasoning has little scope in helping to establish that such and such a ritual will produce such and such a result. One is called upon merely to implement the mandate.

148. B.S.B. 1.1.2, p. 16.

149. See above, Ch. 4.1.

150. B.S.B. 1.1.2, p. 17.

151. Ibid., 1.1.3, pp. 19-20.

152. See above, Ch. 1, pp. 35-36.

153. B.G.B. 13:11, pp. 342-43.

> "The man who has desisted from bad conduct, as also from the lure of the senses, whose mind has become concentrated, and who is also free from anxiety about the results of concentration, and has a teacher, attains the aforesaid Self through knowledge" (KA.U.B.1.2.24, p. 156).

CHAPTER 6

1. K.M. Panikkar, Hinduism and the West (Chandigarh: Panjab University Publications Bureau, 1964), p. 4.

2. For a brief but good discussion of the reasons behind the failure of the bhakti movements see, C.H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 28-38.

3. Ibid., p. 37.

4. For Spencer's influence see ibid., pp. 49-50.

5. David Kopf's excellent study, British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969) is still authoritative.

6. Wilson, quoted in ibid., p. 176.

7. Ibid., p. 284.

8. See R.C. Majumdar, History of the Freedom Movement in India, 3 vols. (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962-63), I, 259-60.

9. We are not aware of any study which has examined the effects of this period of change upon the authority of these texts.

10. For a critical study of the growth and development of the Brahmo Samaj, see David Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979). For a specific discussion of the legacy and wide influence of the movement, see Ch. 2.

11. In 1843, Debendranath Tagore changed the name of the Brahmo Sabha to Brahmo Samaj.

12. See S.K. Das, The Shadow of the Cross: Christianity and Hinduism in a Colonial Context (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974), p. 64. Das is of the opinion that Roy mixed up the issues of religion and nationalism, the inevitable result of the colonial context in which he operated. According to him, the use of the texts as a medium of instruction was primarily the result of nationalistic sentiment.

13. See B.G. Ray, Religious Movements in Modern Bengal (Santiniketan: Visva - Bharati, 1965), p. 13.

14. Sisirkumar Mitra, Resurgent India (Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1963), p. 65.

15. Ibid., p. 66.

16. See, D. Killingley, "Rammohun Roy's Interpretation of the Vedānta" (Ph.D. thesis, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1977), pp. 342-44. As an example of this tendency, Killingley cites Roy's explanation that those parts of the Vedas which teach the worship of figured gods represent an inferior view for the benefit of worshippers incapable of grasping the higher truths. Rammohun justified this interpretation as the only way of preserving the consistency of the text.

17. This attempt to suggest a different view relies a great deal upon Killingley's study. His work is concerned primarily with contrasting the interpretations of Shankara and Rammohun Roy, but it also provides significant clues for ascertaining Roy's attitude to the authority of the Vedas. It is the only available detailed study of his religious thought.

18. Rammohun Roy, quoted in Killingley, p. 341.

19. Rammohun Roy, quoted in Killingley, p. 341.

20. Ibid., pp. 328-36.

21. Ibid., pp. 349-51.

22. Ibid., p. 343.

23. Sivanath Sastri, History of the Brahmo Samaj, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, 1974), p. 47. In spite of Sastri's own involvement in the history of the group, his work is written with commendable objectivity and insight.

24. Keshub Chunder Sen, "The Brahmo Samaj or Theism in India", in K.C. Sen, Discourses and Writings (Calcutta: Brahmo Tract Society, 1904), p. 72.

25. Ibid., pp. 70-71.

26. It is perhaps strange that such a consequential decision has not received any detailed treatment in recent works discussing the movement under Debendranath Tagore. David Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, makes only brief mention of it. See p. 51. Kopf's concern is more with the sociological dimensions of the movement.

27. See Mitra, Resurgent India, pp. 79-82.

28. D.K. Biswas, "Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and the Tattvabodhini Sabha", in A.K. Gupta, ed., Studies in the Bengal Renaissance (Calcutta:

National Council of Education, 1958). See pp. 33-46.

29. See Sivanath Sastri, History of the Brahmo Samaj, p. 63.

30. Quoted in ibid., pp. 63-64. Sastri is of the opinion that this article was penned by Rajnarain Bose, who had then recently joined the Brahmo Samaj. Mitra, Resurgent India, attributes this piece of writing to Debendranath.

31. For a good summary of Datta's views, see Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, pp. 49-54.

32. Sastri, History of the Brahmo Samaj, p. 65.

33. Ibid., p. 65. See also, B.G. Ray, Religious Movements in Modern Bengal, pp. 13-14.

34. It is unfortunate that there are no records of the details of argument on both sides of the question, or of the nature of the studies and inquiries undertaken by Debendranath and his emissaries at Benares. These would have thrown great light on the nature of the debate and the propositions which led Debendranath to concede to Datta.

35. See D. Killingley, "Rammohun Roy's Interpretation of the Vedānta", p. 349.

36. The eleven authentic Upanishads mentioned here are those of the same number commented upon by Shankara.

37. Debendranath Tagore, quoted in S.K. Das, The Shadow of the Cross, pp. 70-71.

38. See J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, Indian ed. (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal 1977), pp. 71-73. See also p. 41.

39. Debendranath Tagore's Brahmo Dharma, trans. Hem Chandra Sarkar (Calcutta: H.C. Sarkar 1928), does not offer a detailed discussion on the source of knowledge of God. Debendranath speaks of an innate knowledge of God hidden in the hearts of all human beings. This innate knowledge is kindled by the study of the universe, in which is revealed the wisdom, beneficience, glory and majesty of God.

> "Truth is revealed in an intuitive knowledge and our Self trusts in the truth. So this natural intuition is the only (ultimate) means of proving the existence of God. When the Infinite Person is revealed in our innate knowledge through intuition, our understanding

finds proof of His wisdom in the creation of the universe and makes known to us His beneficient purpose. Though our infinite [or finite?] understanding cannot fully comprehend the Infinite Person, yet it greatly confirms our intuitive knowledge (of Him). Therefore the seeker of God desirous of salvation should never neglect the cultivation of understanding by the study of the mystery of the world, inner and outer. When understanding is cultivated we can clearly and thoroughly realise the meaning and scope of intuition" (Brahmo Dharma, p. 73).

The few discussions in the Brahmo Dharma on the nature of intuition are not very lucid. At one point the innate knowledge of God is presented as the presupposition of our sense of dependence and imperfection. There is no basis for considering ourselves to be dependent and imperfect, says Tagore, unless there is a perfect and independent being. This intuitive knowledge of God is described as being natural to every soul.

> Doubt in Intuition means cutting the root of all reasoning and leads to utter delusion. It will lead to doubt in our own existence as well as the existence of the outer world and of cause and effect resulting in complete nescience. He who does not believe in intuition can never believe unhesitatingly in the Almighty... who is revealed in knowledge and who is the support of all" (Brahmo Dharma, pp. 119-20).

These views of Debendranath closely parallel the Unitarian ideas of Channing and Parker discussed below, and are suggestive of the influence of the Unitarians.

40. Debendranath, quoted in Mitra, Resurgent India, p. 85.

41. David Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, p. 175.

42. Ibid., p. 79.

43. Ibid., p. 81.

44. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

45. K.C. Sen, "The Living God in England and India", a sermon delivered at Mill-Hill Chapel, Leeds, August 28th, 1870, in K.C. Sen, Discourses and Writings, p. 5.

46. Sastri, History of the Brahmo Samaj, p. 149.

47. We are not aware of any work which specifically

studies and analyzes Keshub's thought. There are a few texts containing surveys of a very general kind only.

48. K.C. Sen, "Great Men", a lecture delivered at the Town Hall, Calcutta, September 28th, 1866, in S.D. Collet ed., Lectures and Tracts by Keshub Chunder Sen, (London: Strahan and Co., 1870), pp. 49-93.

49. Ibid., p. 53. One is reminded of the same argument in Rammohun Roy. In Keshub, the arguments are worked out in more detail.

50. Ibid., p. 56.

51. K.C. Sen, "The Religious Importance of Mental Philosophy", two lectures delivered to the students of the Calcutta Brahmo School, May 5th and 12th, 1867, in Collet ed., Lectures and Tracts, p. 184.

52. Ibid.

53. K.C. Sen, "Great Men", in Collet ed., Lectures and Tracts, p. 57.

54. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

55. The Brahmo Samaj has consistently rejected the orthodox theory of the avatāra.

56. Collet ed., Lectures and Tracts, pp. 71-74.

57. Ibid., p. 86.

58. Ibid., p. 88.

59. K.C. Sen, "Regenerating Faith", a sermon preached on the occasion of the thirty-eighth anniversary of the Brahmo Samaj, January 24th, 1868, in Collet ed., Lectures and Tracts, p. 110.

60. K.C. Sen, "The Brahmo Samaj or Theism in India", in K.C. Sen, Discourses and Writings p. 73.

61. K.C. Sen "The Living God in England and India", pp. 9-11.

62. K.C. Sen, "Primitive Faith and Modern Speculations", substance of an anniversary lecture at the Town Hall, Calcutta, January 23rd, 1872, in K.C. Sen, Discourses and Writings, p. 46.

63. K.C. Sen, "The Existence of God", substance of an unpublished lecture at Albert Hall, Calcutta, January 29th, 1879, in K.C. Sen, Discourses and Writings, p. 58.

64. See Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, Ch. 9. See also S. Sastri, History of the Brahmo Samaj, pp. 163-86.

65. The idea of ādeśa was noted in connection with Debendranath.

66. K.C. Sen, "Apostles of the New Dispensation", a lecture delivered at the Town Hall, Calcutta, on January 22nd, 1881, and quoted in Sastri, History of the Brahmo Samaj, p. 230.

67. K.C. Sen, The New Dispensation or Religion of Harmony (Calcutta: Bidhan Press, 1903), pp. 258-59. This particular work is a compilation of his writings between May and December, 1881.

68. See ibid., pp. 33-35.

69. Ibid., p. 34.

70. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

71. Ibid., p. 257.

72. Ibid., p. 250.

73. Ibid., p. 86.

74. See S.N. Dhar, A Comprehensive Biography of Swami Vivekananda, 2 vols. (Madras: Vivekananda Prakashan Kendra, 1975-76), I, 66. See also Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, pp. 204-6.

75. There are, of course, very important differences between the ideas of Keshub and Vivekananda. The most important perhaps is Keshub's uncompromising rejection of Advaita, which forms the bedrock of Vivekananda's philosophy. There are intriguing parallels, however, some of which will be made obivous in our discussion of Vivekananda. A full contrast between both men is well worth further study.

76. There are many available biographies. See Christopher Isherwood, Ramakrishna and His Disciples, 3rd ed. (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974). Also Romain Rolland, The Life of Ramakrishna (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974).

77. Ramakrishna, quoted in Swami Saradananda, Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master, trans. Swami Jagadananda, 5th revised ed., 2 vols. (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978-79), I, 162-63.

78. See Romain Rolland, The Life of Ramakrishna, pp. 75-80.

79. For this selection, two main sources have been relied upon. The major source is Mahendra Gupta, The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vedanta Center, 1977). This is a detailed record, by the disciple Gupta, of the conversations of Ramakrishna from March 1882 to April 1886, only a few months before his death. It is the authoritative work for any study of Ramakrishna's ideas. The second is, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1975). This is a considerably smaller work based on Gupta's records, which attempts to arrange under subject headings some of his teachings.

80. Sayings of Ramakrishna, pp. 62-64 and pp. 68-69.

81. Ibid., p. 64 and p. 67.

82. The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 625.

83. Ibid., p. 543.

84. Ibid., pp. 645-46.

85. Ibid., p. 475.

86. Ibid., p. 476.

87. Sayings of Ramakrishna, p. 263. See also p. 278 and p. 284. The concept of samādhi will be treated when we consider Vivekananda.

88. Isherwood, Ramakrishna and his Disciples, p. 115.

89. Walter G. Neevel, "The Transformation of Śrī Rāmakrishna", in B.L. Smith ed., Hinduism: New Essays in the History of Religions (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976).

90. Ibid., p. 55.

91. Ibid., p. 67.

92. Ibid., pp. 85-97. In a very recent study, Freda Matchett, "The Teaching of Ramakrishna in Relation to the Hindu Tradition and as Interpreted by Vivekananda", Religion 11 (1981), 171-84, argues along similar lines. Her work seems to draw heavily on Neevel's study, but she argues that no single strand of the Hindu tradition should be emphasized as determining the framework of Ramakrishna's thought.

93. See Heinrich Zimmer, Philosophies of India (New York: Pantheon Books, 1951), p. 569.

94. David Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, p. 4.

95. N.C. Ganguly, Raja Ram Mohun Roy, (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1934), p. 141.

96. Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, pp. 15-26.

97. Sastri, History of the Brahmo Samaj, p. 336.

98. For a full discussion of the basic doctrines and arguments of Unitarian Christianity, see W.E. Channing, The Complete Works (London: Williams and Norgate, 1880), pp. 292-306.

99. Ibid., p. xvii.

100. Ibid., p. 293.

101. Theodore Parker, The Collected Works, ed. Frances Power Cobbe, 12 vols. (London: Trübner and Co., 1863-65), I, 216.

102. See Channing, The Complete Works, p. xvii.

103. Ibid., p. xii.

104. Parker, The Collected Works., I, 140. For full discussion see pp. 138-50.

105. Ibid., I, 1-28.

106. Ibid., I, 7.

107. See K.C. Sen, "The Existence of God", pp. 58-59.

108. Ibid., p. 59.

109. For a discussion of Dayananda's life and the doctrines of the movement see, Lajpat Rai, A History of the Arya Samaj (Bombay: Orient Longman's, 1967). The development of the Arya Samaj is also well treated in K.W. Jones, Arya Dharm (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

110. See Lajpat Rai, History of the Arya Samaj, p. 82. For a full discussion of Dayananda's view of the Vedas see, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, An Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas, trans. Pt. Ghasi Ram (Delhi: Jan Gyan Prakashan, 1973).

111. See R.C. Majumdar, History of the Freedom Movement in India, I, 264.

112. K.M. Panikkar, The Foundations of New India (London: Allen and Unwin, 1963), p. 29.

113. This does not by any means imply that there was agreement on all matters of doctrine between the Brahmo Samaj and Ramakrishna. They were divided on many issues such as the doctrine of transmigration, the concept of the avatāra, the ultimate supremacy of Advaita, and the use of images in worship.

CHAPTER 7

1. CW1, pp. 204-6.

2. Shankara clearly uses the word āgama as synonymous with the words of the śruti. See KE.U.B. 1.3, p. 49. Vivekananda translates āpta as "attained".

3. CW1, p. 204.

4. Ibid.

5. CW6, p. 181.

6. CW1, p. 205.

7. It is very interesting to note the similarity of this argument with the ones advanced by Shankara for the necessity and justification of the Vedas as a pramāna. His general contention is that the Vedas are necessary to provide knowledge of those things which cannot be obtained through our normal processes of knowing. It is not concerned to inform us of subjects knowable through perception and inference. See above, Ch.3.3, pp. 99-109. Here, however, Vivekananda applies this criterion to the evaluation of the integrity of the āpta.

8. CW1, p. 205. Again there is a similarity between this criterion and Shankara's argument that one pramāṇa does not contradict another, but only provides information unknown through any other means. See BR.U.B.2.1.20, p. 209.

9. CW8, p. 270. Also CW4, p. 340; CW1, p. 232. It is interesting to note that Vivekananda uses the concept of the āpta to argue for the acceptance of his translation of, The Imitation of Christ, among Hindu readers. He argues that the words of such persons have a probative force and are "technically" known as śabda-pramāna. This identification of śabda-pramāna with the words of the āpta is adopted by Vivekananda from the philosophy of Nyāya. See N.Y.S.G. 1.7, p. 5. According to Nyāya, śabda-pramāṇa is twofold in its concern. It informs us of things which are the objects of perception and of those things which cannot be seen (dṛishṭa and adṛishṭa).

10. CW2, p. 60.

11. CW3, p. 494.

12. CW1, p. 7. This analogy is just one example of the continuous attempt of Vivekananda to draw parallels between the spheres of science and religion

and their respective methods and findings. It is an important feature of his thought, and we shall be examining this later. See also, CW8, p. 232.

13. CW3, p. 409. The view that knowledge is within is a repeated assertion of Vivekananda, and we shall be exploring this subsequently, as far as possible.

14. See CW1, pp. 185-86; CW6, p. 14.

15. CW1, p. 326. Also CW7, p. 210.

16. CW8, p. 124.

17. CW2, p. 163.

18. See CW4, p. 191; CW7, p. 89.

19. "The book is not the proof of your conduct, but you are the proof of the book. How do you know that a book teaches truth? Because you are truth and feel it. That is what the Vedanta says" (CW2, p. 307). See also, CW1, p. 369, 324.

20. CW3, p. 253.

21. CW7, p. 9.

22. CW1, p. 185.

23. See CW2, p. 473; CW5, p. 410.

24. CW3, p. 175. The same idea is expressed in the view that belief is only possible when individuals become prophets. See CW6, p. 13, 181.

25. CW3, p. 283. With reference to Christianity, Vivekananda asserted that the ideal was not to follow the Bible, but to become the Bible, to see it as a mere guide-post. See CW4, p. 45. In connection with this, he presented Christ and Buddha as states to be attained. The historical Christ and Gautama were persons who manifested it. See CW7, p. 29; CW8, p. 105.

26. See CW3, p. 284.

27. See CW4, p. 165; CW7, p. 85, 89.

28. See CW3, p. 283; CW5, p. 311, 411; CW7, p. 6; CW8, p. 27.

29. The concept of religion as realization is a central one in Vivekananda's philosophy of religion, and will be explored later.

30. CW1, p. 232.

31. See CW8, p. 255.

32. See CW7, p. 41.

33. Ibid., p. 253.

34. CW7, p. 70.

"Religion, which is the highest knowledge and the highest wisdom, cannot be bought, nor can it be acquired from books" (CW3, p. 52). Also CW8, p. 210.

35. See CW1, p. 412; CW4, p. 34, 190.

36. See CW3, p. 45; CW4, p. 168.

37. See CW4, p. 238, 166; CW6, p. 101.

38. CW7, p. 34.

39. See CW8, p. 218; CW2, p. 483.

40. See CW2, pp. 38-39, 46; CW1, p. 257.

41. See CW1, p. 185.

42. For Vivekananda's references to <u>śravaṇa</u>, <u>manana</u> and <u>nididhyāsana</u>, see CW1, p. 177; CW2, p. 396; CW3, p. 402; CW4, p. 245; CW5, p. 302, 322; CW7, p. 37; CW8, pp. 154-55.

43. CW1, p. 504.

44. See CW3, p. 25.

45. CW7, pp. 37-38.

46. See CW4, p. 148; CW6, p. 64.

47. CW8, p. 114.

48. See CW4, p. 24.

49. CW6, p. 184. He also admires Buddha for his discovery of truth by himself. See CW8, p. 104.

50. See CW1, p. 328. This was in response to whether he believed that the "Sermon on the Mount" was preached by Christ.

51. Ibid., p. 186.

52. Ibid., p. 453; CW8, p. 34.

"The Church tries to fit Christ into it, not the Church into Christ; so only those writings were preserved that suited the purpose in hand. Thus the books are not to be depended upon and book-worship is the worst kind of idolatry to bind out feet. All has to conform to the book - science, religion, philosophy; it is the most horrible tyranny, this tyranny of the Protestant Bible" (CW7, p. 30).

53. CW4, p. 42. Vivekananda also sees belief in books as being responsible for much of the fanaticism associated with religious persecutions.

54. See CW6, p. 47; CW1, p. 329.

55. CW2, p. 374.

56. See CW8, p. 34.

57. See ibid., p. 255; CW3, p. 521; CW2, p. 195.

58. See CW5, p. 411, 315.

59. See CW2, pp. 159-60.

60. Ibid., p. 336; Also CW6, p. 47. One must admit, however, that in both of these places Vivekananda simplifies and caricatures the Mīmānsā theory that creation proceeds out of the eternal words of the Vedas. It is not that one verifies the existence of anything by its mention in the Vedas. For our earlier discussion of this theory, see above, Ch. 3.1, pp. 89-96. Vivekananda also attacks the view of the Vedas as a treasury of the sum total of all knowledge, past, present and future, revealed to a particular group. See CW4, p. 433. It is important to note that in Shankara's view, it is not the purpose of the Vedas to inform us of everything. They only impart beneficial knowledge which is unobtainable through any other means.

61. For Vivekananda's discussion of these processes see CW1, pp. 405-16; CW8, pp. 106-21.

62. In Vivekananda's treatment of these qualities, he presents them more as fully accomplished rather than as preparatory.

63. CW8, p. 107.

64. CW1, p. 405.

65. See ibid., p. 406.

66. See CW8, pp. 112-13.

67. See CW1, pp. 407-11.

68. See ibid., p. 412.

69. Ibid., p. 414.

70. Ibid., p. 416.

71. For a full discussion of Shankara's orthodox views on this matter see B.S.B. 1.3.34, pp. 229-34.

72. See CW7, pp. 117-18.

73. For Shankara's views see BR.U.B. 3.5.1, pp. 334-41; PR.U.B. 1.16, pp. 424-25.

74. CW6, p. 505; Also CW7, p. 193; CW1, p. 410, 184; CW5, p. 261.

75. See particularly above, Ch. 3.3. B.S.B. 1.1.4, is especially concerned with establishing this view.

76. BR.U.B. 2.3.6, p. 236.

77. Ibid., 3.5.1, p. 336.

78. See CW3, p. 233.

79. See CW7, p. 40. It must be added, however, that Vivekananda does not provide any detailed evidence to substantiate his accusations.

80. CW3, p. 233. Ramakrishna's life, according to Vivekananda, was a working out of the underlying harmony of all religious groups in India.

81. See, for example, CW2, pp. 240-53.

82. CW3, p. 234.

83. Ibid., pp. 281-82.

84. See CW8, pp. 24-25. Vivekananda sees the Bhagavadgītā as a good illustration of this principle of exegesis; it proposes, according to him, a gradual method of exegesis until the Absolute is attained. See CW3, pp. 261-62.

85. See CH.U.B. 8.12.1, p. 472. We have referred to this method in above, Ch.4.3, p. 145.

86. See CW3, pp. 397-98.

87. CW5, p. 263. Also CW8, pp. 139-40.

88. CW1, p. 18.

89. CW2, p. 500.

90. Ibid., p. 347.

91. See, for example, CW1, pp. 322-23.

92. See above, Ch.4.2, pp. 140-41.

93. See CW1, pp. 450-54.

94. See CW3, pp. 103-461.

95. Vivekananda often said that by the term *śruti* he meant primarily the *Upanishads*. He felt that in the present times most of the rituals of the *karmakānda* were impractical.

96. CW3, p. 121.

97. He often spoke out against the problem of a plurality of authoritative sources and the prevalence of *Tantra* practices in Bengal. His tone was usually impassioned on these occasions. Without specifying the nature of the customs, he often vehemently denounced the *vāmācāra* (left-handed) practices of *Tantra*, describing these as "horrible debauchery". He felt that the texts authorizing these practices had replaced *śruti* in Bengal. See, for example, ibid., pp. 332-33, 340-41.

98. CW3, p. 120.

99. Ibid., p. 228. In India, Vivekananda often said that he preferred the name "Vedantist" rather than "Hindu". He thought the latter term to be quite descriptively meaningless, while "Vedantist" signified the common acceptance of the authority of the *Vedas*.

100. Ibid., p. 220.

101. Ibid., pp. 286-87. It is obvious that when Vivekananda spoke of religion as forming the rallying point of national unity, he was thinking primarily of Hinduism. Islam, for instance, was not mentioned in the context of this unity. National unity basically meant Hindu religious accord. Vivekananda did not seem to anticipate the fears and suspicions this could have aroused among non-Hindus, and the eventual division of his country over this very question.

102. Ibid., p. 333.

103. Ibid., p. 280.

104. Ibid., p. 120.

105. CW6, p. 182.

106. See CW3, pp. 248-50; CW6, p. 105.

107. CW3, pp. 182-83.

108. Ibid., 249.

109. Ibid., pp. 118-19, 183-84, 249-51, 279-80, 332. The foundation of Vedānta on impersonal principles was one of its characteristics, Vivekananda claimed, which commended it as a universal religion. It is impossible, he argued to unite all people around any particular human figure.

110. See, for example, CW1, pp. 6-7. For the Indian expression of this interpretation, see CW5, p. 206; CW6, p. 9, 103.

111. See CW3, pp. 118-19.

112. Ibid., p. 230, 322, 456.

113. Ibid., p. 334. Vivekananda's attempt to reconcile Vedic statements on the principle of an evolution from dualism to non-dualism also featured more prominently in his Indian addresses. We have also earlier noted his ridicule of the Mīmāṅsā theory of the creation of the world from Vedic words. There is one occasion in India, however, when he showed considerable sympathy to this argument and offered an interpretation of it to a disciple. See CW6, pp. 495-99. The gist of Vivekananda's argument in this lengthy discussion is that with reference to the origin of the universe from Vedic words, the term śabda (lit. word) indicates subtle ideas. Even when the entire universe is withdrawn, the subtle idea or śabda-state of every created object exists in brahman, and the gross objects are created out of these subtle ideas. In Shankara's own discussion of this theory, we have seen that he does not distinguish between śabda as word and śabda as idea.

114. T.M.P. Mahadevan, Swami Vivekananda and the Indian Renaissance, (Coimbatore: Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Teachers College, 1965), p. 52.

115. R.S. Srivastava, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1965), p. 43.

116. It is possible to argue that in the West, Vivekananda felt that Advaita could be made more acceptable if he gave little or no significance to the Vedas as its authoritative source. But Vivekananda's denunciation of the value of scriptures was not confined to the Vedas, and the reasons for this censure are too broad to be explained away by this argument.

117. CW3, pp. 254-55.

CHAPTER 8

1. See CW1, p. 53; CW2, pp. 83-84; CW3, p. 128.
2. CW1, p. 238; Also CW2, pp. 257-58.
3. See CW2, p. 439; CW4, p. 227.
4. CW2, p. 281; Also CW1, p. 27, 333; CW7, p. 37.
5. CW2, p. 350; Also CW3, p. 239.
6. In the present chapter, we have confined ourselves to a discussion of karma, bhakti and jñāna. Rājayoga is closely linked with the central spiritual experience about which Vivekananda continuously speaks, and we shall be considering this method in Chapter 9.
7. CW8, p. 152.
8. See CW4, p. 432; CW6, p. 182.
9. CW1, p. 55.
10. Ibid., p. 93.
11. For elaborations of this argument see CW2, pp. 385-88; CW6, pp. 16-17, 137-38.
12. CW1, pp. 28-29.
13. See ibid., pp. 31-32.
14. Ibid., pp. 42-43; Also p. 62.
15. CW5, p. 246; Also CW1, p. 84.
16. See CW1, pp. 59-60, 102.
17. Ibid., pp. 56-57.
18. CW2, p. 392.
19. "Performing actions without attachment for the sake of Īśvara, man attains moksha, through attaining purity of mind (sattva-śuddhi)" (B.G.B. 3:19, p. 104).
20. Vivekananda often argues about the contradiction of the concept of a perfect life. Good and evil, he says, define each other, and the former is not possible without having the latter. The sum total of pain in the world is always the same; the variation is only in expression. See CW1, pp. 83-84, 111-13.

21. See CW1, pp. 36-37.

22. Ibid., p. 39.

23. See ibid., pp. 72-75. Along with his attempt to enlarge the concept of karmayoga, one also finds in Vivekananda the search for new ways of justifying this means. The primary new rationale centres around the idea of karmayoga as the secret of activity or work. Sometimes this is emphasized in a manner which appears to take karmayoga out of the context of being a way to moksha and converts it into a pragmatic method of maximising the success of any activity. The main argument in this context is that failure in accomplishing the ends of activity is often due to an obsession with these ends, and insufficient attention to the means. Karmayoga remedies this by diverting attention from the result and stressing the perfection of the means. See CW2, pp. 1-9. Vivekananda also sees the self-restraint involved in being indifferent to rewards as leading to the cultivation of will-power. For a contemporary discussion of the karmayoga concept see, Ursula King, "Who is the Ideal Karmayogin? The Meaning of a Hindu Religious Symbol", Religion 10 (1980), 41-59.

24. CW1, p. 111. Also p. 93. Among other reasons, Buddha is described as an ideal karmayogī because of what Vivekananda considers to be his doctrinal indifference.

25. Ibid., pp. 100-101.

> "So the only way is to give up all the fruits of work, to be unattached to them. Know that this world is not we, nor are we this world; that we are really not the body; that we really do not work. We are the Self, eternally at rest and at peace" (ibid., p. 116).

26. Ibid., p. 84. Also CW7, p. 179.

27. CW1, pp. 34-35.

28. Ibid., p. 59.

29. Ibid., p. 93. These are very typical of the kinds of passages one encounters in trying to understand how karmayoga leads directly to knowledge. For other examples see ibid., p. 107, 110; CW3, p. 142; CW4, p. 436; CW7, p. 63, 69, 75, 110.

30. See CW8, p. 153.

31. See CW1, pp. 84-87.

32. CW7, pp. 111-12.

33. See CW1, p. 109.

34. Ibid., p. 106.

35. Ibid., p. 512. See also p. 498.

36. CW5, p. 325.

    "Good works and all that (merely) make the mind a little quiet" (CW1, p. 517). See also CW5, pp. 240-41; CW7, p. 54, 159-60, 221-22.

37. CW7, pp. 178-79.

38. CW3, p. 31.

39. Ibid., p. 36.

40. CW6, p. 90.

41. Vivekananda defines <u>īśvara</u> in accordance with B.S. 1.1.2, "From whom is the birth, continuation, and dissolution of the universe".

42. CW3, p. 37. Also p. 42.

43. CW3, pp. 59-62.

    "The object of Bhakti is God. Love cannot be without a subject and an object. The object of love again must be at first a being who can reciprocate our love. Therefore the God of love must be in some sense a human God. He must be a God of love" (CW8, p. 153).

44. CW3, p. 387.

45. The disadvantage of this method, according to Vivekananda, is its tendency to degenerate into fanaticism. The reverse side of the singleness of attachment required in <u>bhaktiyoga</u> is often the deprecation of everything else, for we seem only to be able to love our own ideals by hating all others. This danger, however, says Vivekananda, is only a possibility in the lower and early stages of <u>bhaktiyoga</u>.

46. CW3, pp. 70-71.

47. Ibid., p. 72. Also pp. 77-79; CW6, p. 90; CW7, p. 198. In commending the virtues of <u>bhaktiyoga</u>, Vivekananda mentions what he sees as some disadvantages and difficulties of <u>jñāna</u> and <u>rājayoga</u>. <u>Jñāna</u>, he says, requires favourable circumstances and strenuous practice. There is also the danger of being caught "in the interminable net of vain argumentation", and of knowledge being used to justify any kind of conduct. In <u>rājayoga</u>, the

danger is the attraction for the acquisition of psychic powers.

48. In karmayoga, for example, there is no emphasis on the necessity of a teacher. The main reason for the wealth of details he provides in his discussions on bhaktiyoga is the availability of a mass of traditional literature on the subject. In these discussions, he draws heavily on the commentaries of Ramanuja.

49. For a full discussion of these qualifications see CW4, pp. 1-12, 21-33; CW3, pp. 45-56, 64-69. The Bhagavadgītā (17:7-10) relates the nature of the food preferred to the characteristics of the individual temperament. Preference is determined by the predominance of the qualities of sattva, rajas or tamas. See also CH.U.7.26.2.

50. CW3, pp. 47-48.

51. Because of the secondary role which he ascribes to scriptures and therefore, exegesis, Vivekananda does not seem to consider the possibility that a knowledge of philology, etymology and syntax, may be of great value in arriving at the spirit of any scripture.

52. CW3, p. 50; Also CW4, pp. 24-26. The question of Krishna's historicity was widely discussed at the turn of the nineteenth century in Bengal. See Ursula King, "True and Perfect Religion: Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Reinterpretation of Hinduism", Religion 7 (1977), 127-48.

53. CW3, pp. 93-99.

54. Ibid., pp. 95-96.

55. See CW2, pp. 47-49; CW3, pp. 86-90, 391-92; CW6, pp. 70-71.

56. CW3, p. 82; Also p. 76, 92.

57. See CW4, p.3; CW3. P. 35, 38.

58. CW7, p. 192; Also p. 121; CW1. p. 440; CW3. p. 32, 128, 282.

59. CW3, pp. 72-73; Also pp. 42-43, 78; CW1, p. 13.

Vivekananda explains that grace operates both within and outside the concept of law. While it naturally descends on the pure, it is not constrained by any conditions. The Lord has a playful nature, and grace can bring about even unsolicited release. See CW6, pp. 481-83.

60. CW5, p. 317.

61. CW3, p. 100. For other examples see p. 86; CW8, p. 221, 258.

62. See above, Ch. 7.5, pp. 289-90.

63. See CW1, p. 98; CW3, p. 11. CW7, p. 198.

64. CW8, p. 3.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., p. 11; Also p. 10; CW3, p. 17.

67. See, for example, CW1, p. 98.

68. See CW5, p. 300.

69. See CW6, p. 464; CW8, p. 4.

70. See CW5, p. 272; CW8, p. 8.

71. See CW1, p. 150, 181.

72. Ibid., p. 232.

73. See CW8, p. 20.

74. CW2, p. 162.

75. See above, Ch.5.5, pp. 196-206.

76. KA.U. 1.2.9.

77. See CW2, pp. 162-63; CW7, p. 167.

78. See KA.U.B. 1.2.7-8, pp. 137-41.

79. See CW1, p. 150, 183, 197, 262-63; CW2, p. 61.

80. CW1, p. 232.

81. CW2, p. 306; Also p. 307; CW5, p. 283; CW7, p. 60, 91-92.

82. See, "Reason and Religion", in CW1, pp. 366-82. For arguments along the same lines, see also CW2, pp. 329-36; CW3, pp. 423-24; CW8, p. 184.

83. CW1, p. 367. Vivekananda also suggests that reason is the only guide able to decide among the conflicting claims of religion. Conflicting claims cannot be decided by each asserting the superiority of its authoritative text.

84. Ibid., pp. 369-70.

85. Ibid., p. 371.

86. Ibid., p. 372.

87. See CW1, p. 99; CW3, p. 73.

88. See David Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, pp. 42-86.

89. See, for example, CW1, pp. 14-15.

90. Ibid.

91. Vivekananda also sees as characteristic of the scientific method, the availability of a common experiential referent, against which the truth or fallacy of its conclusions can be readily evaluated. Because he can evaluate scientific claims by reference to his own experiences, the ordinary man, Vivekananda argues, has no difficulty in seeing their plausibility. It is important for him to identify this as describing the scientific approach, for in rājayoga he proposes a method for arriving at such an experience in the religious sphere, against which its claims could be evaluated. It is clear here, however, that he is equating two different kinds of experiences, and in the next chapter we shall be looking at the difficulties which this equation presents. For a discussion on some of the problems of defining the nature of science see A.F. Chalmers, What is This Thing Called Science, 2nd ed. Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1982.

92. See CW2, p. 335, 390.

93. For a good example of this, see CW2, "The Cosmos", pp. 203-25. The Upanishads themselves, of course frequently draw this analogy.

94. CW2, pp. 254-55.

95. See CW1, p. 24; CW2, p. 363.

96. "Religion is the acceptance of all existing creeds, seeing in them the same striving toward the same destination. Creed is something antagonistic and combative" (CW7, p. 286).

97. CW2, pp. 382-83.

CHAPTER 9

1. CW1, p. 13.

2. CW3, pp. 377-78.

3. This, of course, challenges his own attempt to present the method of jñānayoga as a path to ultimate knowledge through independent reasoning.

4. In Chapter 8, we have made reference to his attempts to draw analogies with the methods and findings of science. The further significance of these attempts will become more obvious in his arguments for the imperative of a direct perception of religious truths.

5. Vivekananda distinguishes between internal and external experience. He classifies knowledge gathered from the former as psychology, metaphysics and religion, and from the latter as the physical sciences. See CW2, p. 432. Even when knowledge is gained from someone's words, says Vivekananda, one must presume the experience in a former existence, because only through experience can one learn anything. See CW7, p. 46.

6. CW1, p. 125. For similar statements on the derivation of all knowledge from experience, see CW2, p. 226; CW6, p. 81, 128, 132-33.

7. CW1, p. 126. Also CW2, pp. 60-61. There are occasions in India, however, when Vivekananda asserted that the idea of religion as direct perception is unique to Hinduism. See CW3, p. 345.

8. See CW1, p. 127, 122.

   "The Vedanta says that Yoga is the one way that makes men realise this divinity" (CW5, p. 282).

9. See CW1, p. 128, 131; Also CW8, p. 36.

10. See CW1, p. 137.

11. See ibid., pp. 147-48.

12. Vivekananda often enthusiastically describes the control of prāna in the body as leading to a control of all forces in the universe, to all knowledge, and eventually to freedom. See CW1, pp. 148-49.

13. See CW1, pp. 171-78.

14. Ibid., p. 186; Also p. 181, 270.

15. Ibid., p. 188.

16. The kundalinī is described by Vivekananda as a coiled up, unmanifested energy lying at the base of the spinal canal. Its awakening through the practice of rājayoga leads to its upward movement through a subtle, non-physical hollow in the spinal column (sushumna). As it progresses, it passes through seven centres of consciousness (cakras), each step marked by distinct spiritual experiences. When it reaches the seventh, the thousand-petalled (sahasrāra cakra) located in the brain, full spiritual illumination is gained. See CW1, pp. 160-70. For more information see Agehananda Bharati, The Tantric Tradition (London: Rider & Company, 1965).

17. CW1, p. 165.

18. See Georg Feuerstein, The Philosophy of Classical Yoga (Manchester University Press, 1980). The word Tantra means a system or discipline. There is a great division of opinion among scholars over the origin of the beliefs and practices of Tantra. Although the earliest Tantric texts are not dated before the fifth century A.D., attempts have been made to find its roots in the Rig-Veda. See G. Feuerstein and J. Miller, A Reappraisal of Yoga (London: Rider & Company, 1971). See Ch. 5. Other views suggest that it was the prevalent form of worship among the non-Aryans and gradually assimilated by the Aryans. It has also been argued that the roots of Tantra are to be found in Mahāyāna Buddhism. According to T.W. Organ, the background of Tantra is largely Sāmkhya. While Śiva is the passive purusha, Śakti is the dynamic prakriti. The evolution and diversity of the world are traced to the interaction of the three gunas. Tantricism classifies the Hindu scriptures into the āgamas and nigamas, equivalent to the traditional distinction between śruti and smriti. Tantric texts, however, are accorded the status of āgamas (śruti) while the Vedas are grouped with the nigamas (smṛiti). See T.W. Organ, The Hindu Quest for the Perfection of Man, first paperbound ed. (Ohio: Ohio University, 1980). See Ch. 5, pp. 319-29. For a good discussion of Ramakrishna in the context of Tantra see H. Zimmer, Philosophies of India, pp. 560-95.

19. See CW2, p. 389, 446.

20. CW1, p. 150, 180.

21. We have already considered in detail the nature of reason in Vivekananda. See above, Ch. 8.3, pp. 340-44.

22. CW1, p. 180. Also CW4, p. 213.

23. CW1, p. 185. Also CW2, p. 390; CW4, p. 59. It is significant that Vivekananda often substitutes the term "inspiration" for samādhi or superconsciousness. See, for example, CW2, p. 389-90. Keshub Chandra Sen also upholds inspiration as the highest instrument of spiritual knowledge. He presents it as direct communion with God made possible through His mercy. We have suggested that Keshub was deeply influenced in this matter by leading Unitarian writers of the time. See above, Ch. 6.4, pp. 246-50; Ch. 6.6, pp. 261-66.

24. CW1, p. 129.

25. Ibid., p. 130. See also CW2, pp. 390-91; CW5, p. 299. Vivekananda often replaces the words concentration and observation by meditation, and speaks of the latter as the great scientific method of knowledge, the process through which all scientific and other types of knowledge is gained. See, for example, CW4, p. 230, 249.

26. CW1, p. 131.

27. "In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light. This, the power of concentration, is the only key to the treasure house of knowledge. The system of Raja-Yoga deals almost exclusively with this" (CW2, p. 391).

28. CW1, pp. 130-31, 135.

29. Ibid., p. 129, 131.

30. See CW2, p. 163, 413. Vivekananda's arguments about the derivation of the fundamental doctrines of religion from the study of the mind is almost identical with Keshub Chandra Sen's views on this subject. See above, Ch. 6.4, p. 247.

31. CW1, p. 28. Also CW3, p. 130; CW2, pp. 339-40.

32. CW1, p. 28.

33. Ibid., pp. 216-17.

34. Ibid., p. 439. Also CW7, p. 71. CH.U. 4.4.1 - 4.9.3, describes the method by which the student, Satyakāma, gains brahmajñāna. After convincing his teacher of his strict adherence to truth, he is initiated and given four hundred lean and weak cows to tender. He departs from his teacher, promising not to return until the herd had multiplied to a thousand cows. The text describes Satyakama's instruction by a bull, fire, a flamingo and an aquatic bird. According to Vivekananda, the student mistakenly

interprets the knowledge which was coming from within himself, as originating from the external world. See CW2, pp. 309-11.

35. CW4, pp. 431-32; CW5, p. 366.

36. CW1, pp. 183-84.

37. Ibid., p. 184. Vivekananda uses Muhammad as an example of a prophet who accidentally encountered the state of samādhi.

38. Ibid., p. 188, 212-13.

39. CW7, p. 196.

40. CW8, p. 40.

41. CW7, p. 195.

"Then when the mind is free from activity or functioning, it vanishes, and the Self is revealed" (CW6, p. 475). See also, CW1, p. 203, 234.

42. "If you can get absolutely still for just one moment, you have reached the goal. The mind may go on working after that; but it will never be the same mind again. You will know yourself as you are - your true Self. Still the mind but for one moment, and the truth of your real nature will flash upon you, and freedom is at hand; no more bondage after that" (CW6, pp. 96-97). See also CW1, p. 453; CW7, p. 431, 434.

43. See CW8, p. 36; CW7, p. 140.

44. See CW7, p. 196. Also CW5, p. 336; CW6, p. 89.

45. CW5, p. 392. For the second account see CW7, p. 139. In this description, he says that he was only able to return to the relative world because of a persistence of the ego-sense.

46. Some of the roots of this idea of religion as direct perception and realization, with its rejection of formal learning, organization, and worship, go back perhaps to the tradition of bhakti, and in Bengal, to its poet-saints. Vivekananda himself, in a lecture on Ramakrishna, mentions the idea as being common among these poets. See CW4, pp. 164-65. This is an area that deserves further examination. In Vivekananda himself, the quest for some form of direct, authoritative and immediate knowledge of God seems to have been well developed even before his meeting with Ramakrishna. Keshub Chandra Sen, with whom we have suggested certain significant parallels, could have been an important influence. The following questions put by Vivekananda to Ramakrishna

are significant in understanding the kind of quest he was pursuing at that time. The words are Vivekananda's own.

> I heard of this man, and I went to hear him. He looked just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him. He used the most simple language, and I thought "Can this man be a great teacher"? - I crept near to him and asked him the question which I had been asking others all my life: "Do you believe in God, Sir"? "Yes", he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir"? "Yes". "How"? "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense". That impressed me at once. For the first time I found a man who dared to say that he saw God, that religion was a reality to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world" (CW4, p. 179).

The search for an incontrovertible, self-validating experience, must in part also be the result of the scepticism induced in his thought at college through the works of writers such as Mill, Hume and Spencer. Reason seemed a meandering path with no visible end, and failed to satisfy him. The kind of scepticism which seemed to have plagued him in his early days was evinced much later on, after the death of Ramakrishna. There were doubts in his mind about the authoritativeness of the Vedas, and the reliability of its authors. He sought answers from Pramadadas Mitra of Benares, whose erudition he regarded highly. See letter to Pramadadas Mitra in, Letters of Swami Vivekananda, 4th ed., (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976), pp. 7-11. It is quite possible that his search for a spiritual experience may also have been prompted, in part, by his study of English Romantic poetry, with its strong mystical bent and its preference for the faculties of intuition and feeling as opposed to reason. It is significant that one version of his life records as the motive for his first visit to Ramakrishna, a discussion of a verse from Wordsworth's "Excursion", describing a state of mystic rapture. See S.N. Dhar, A Comprehensive Biography of Swami Vivekananda, I, 79-80.

47. CW1, p. 415. Also CW4, p. 34.

48. CW4, p. 167.

49. CW7, p. 64.

> "If God is true, we must feel Him as a fact, and if there is a soul, we ought to be able to see it and feel it" (CW8, p. 39). These references cited here are representative of his innumerable and almost identical statements on this issue. For similar affirmations see CW1, p. 232, 234; CW2,

p. 129, 372, 410-11, 474, CW4, p. 30, 126.

50. See CW5, p. 318.

51. See CW8, p. 233.

52. CW1, p. 159.

53. Ibid., p. 164.

54. CW4, p. 58.

55. CW8, p. 12.

56. See CW3, p. 100, 282. Also CW6, p. 97; CW7, p. 92.

57. CW2, p. 284. Similar views, in almost identical language, are repeated in nearly every one of Vivekananda's major addresses.

58. See CW8, p. 45; CW7, p. 60.

59. See CW1, p. 128; CW2, p. 165; CW4, p. 128; CW7, p. 77.

60. CW1, pp. 184-85.

61. In Ch.8.3, pp. 346-50, we have already considered some of the general difficulties raised in connection with his equation of Advaita and science.

62. For a brief, lucid discussion of many of the problems associated with a evaluating religious experience see, P. Donavan, Interpreting Religious Experience (London: Sheldon Press, 1979).

63. For our discussion of Shankara's position on this issue see above, Ch. 3.3, pp. 102-105.

64. CW2, pp. 133-34; Also CW3, p. 422.

65. For a series of illuminating discussions on this issue see S.T. Katz ed., Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis (London: Sheldon Press, 1978). Also Ninian Smart, "Interpretation and Mystical Experience", Religious Studies 1 (1965), 75-87.

66. See above, Ch.7.1, pp. 273-74.

67. CW1, p. 140.

68. See ibid., p. 251, 253, 361; CW2, pp. 454-62. Among the differences mentioned by Vivekananda are the Sāṃkhya concept of a plurality of individual selves, and the total separation of the self (purusha) from nature (prakṛiti). He also argues against the concept of a plurality of infinites.

69. See CW6, p. 81; CW7, p. 43.

70. CW6, p. 125.

71. CW5, p. 250. The suggestion of moksha as obtaining only in the state of samādhi occurs throughout Vivekananda's rājayoga presentation. For two specific discussions where this view is very obvious see CW1, pp. 197-99, 212-24.

72. See CW6, p. 456.

73. See ibid., pp. 132-33; Also CW3, p.1, 72.

74. See CW1, p. 160, 255; CW4, p. 226.

75. See CW1, p. 133, 172, 257, 412.

76. Sāmkhya, as a system of dualistic realism, proposes two ultimate realities, purusha and prakriti. They are absolutely separate and independent of each other in respect of their existence. Unlike Advaita, there is an infinity of purushas, each distinct from the other. Through some unexplained process, purushas got mixed up in prakriti, and impose the qualities of prakriti upon themselves. In Sāmkhya, moksha involves total isolation (kaivalya) of each purusha from prakriti, and from each other. Since prakriti is as real as purusha, any association between the two would constitute bondage and this seems to explain the emphasis on isolation or withdrawal. For a brief discussion see R.C. Zaehner, Hinduism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 69-70. For detailed account see C. Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, Ch. 9. Also S.N. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, first Indian ed., 5 vols., (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), I, Ch. 7.

77. For a specific discussion of this point see above, Ch. 5.5, pp. 206-9.

78. For our discussion of the status and function of reason in Shankara see above, Ch. 5.5, pp. 196-206.

79. In CW3, pp. 281-82, three such texts are mentioned by Vivekananda. These are KE.U. 1.3, and 2.2, as well as TA.U. 2.9.1. We are using Vivekananda's own translations.

80. KE.U.B. 1.4, pp. 50-51.

81. See TA.U.B. 2.9.1, pp. 385-86. We have discussed Shankara's approach to the problem of defining brahman which lacks genus, quality, relation and activity in above Ch.4.3, pp. 143-56.

82. See, for example, CW3, p. 10, 55; CW1, p. 365.

83. CW7, p. 140.

84. Vivekananda appears to be even more inconsistent when in ibid., p. 112, he describes the state of samādhi as being only of a temporary duration.

85. See above, Ch.5.2, pp. 170-71.

86. This is the last sūtra, and the repetition of the sentence indicates the end of the text.

87. See B.S.B. 4.4.22, pp. 911-12.

88. See above, Ch.5.5, pp. 214-16.

89. See above, Ch.4.3, pp. 143-45; Also Ch. 5.5, pp. 194-95.

90. CH.U. 4.4.1 - 4.9.3, which Vivekananda interprets as affirming his theory of brahmajñāna as being within, is understood differently by Shankara. When Satyakāma returns to his teacher's home, his teacher, noticing his radiant appearance, realizes that he had received instruction about brahman. He inquires about this, and is told by Satyakama that he received instruction from "people other than human beings". Unlike Vivekananda, Shankara says that the student was instructed by deities. It is very interesting that in the next verse (4.9.3), Satyakāma still requests instruction from his teacher. In his commentary, Shankara paraphrases this request.

> Further, it has been heard by me, in this connection, from sages like Your Reverence, that it is only knowledge learnt from the Teacher that becomes best, - acquires its highest character; hence Your Reverence alone should teach me" (CH.U.B. 4.9.3, p. 198).

91. B.G. 4:32, advances the traditional method of the Upanishads for gaining knowledge. The student is advised to approach the teacher with reverence, service and inquiry. Commenting on this verse, Shankara says that the teacher should be asked about the cause of bondage, the means of deliverance, and the nature of ignorance and knowledge. See also MU.U. 1.2.12-13, along with Shankara's commentary. There is no suggestion in these texts discussing the role of the teacher, that the knowledge he imparts is already possessed by his student.

CONCLUSION

1. CW3, pp. 194-95.

2. Ibid., p. 450.

3. Ibid., p. 195, 213-20.

4. For a detailed discussion of the impact of science in Bengal in the nineteenth century see David Kopf, The Brahmo Samaj, Chapter 2: "The Deification of Science, Humanity and Reason: Brahmo Secularism", pp. 42-85.

5. We have referred to de Smet's study in Chapter 1. For Murty's analysis see K. Satchidananda Murty, Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta (Andhra University and Columbia University Press, 1959; reprint ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary Sources in Sanskrit (The Commentaries of Shankara)

The editions of the works below which were consulted for this study are those published in the Anandasrama Sanskrit Series (Poona: 1891-1928). These are available in the library of the London School of Oriental and African Studies. The series number and date of publication are indicated after each title.

Aitareyopanishadbhāshya 11 [1911].

Bhagavadgītābhāshya 34 [1908-9]. 2 vols.

Brahmasūtrabhāshya 21 [1891-1900]. 2 vols.

Bṛihadāraṇyakopanishadbhāshya 15 [1914].

Chāndogyopanishadbhāshya 14 [1913]

Īśopanishadbhāshya 5 [1912].

Kaṭhopanishadbhāshya 7 [1914].

Kenopanishadbhāshya 6 [1917].

Māṇḍūkyopanishadbhāshya with Gauḍapādakārikābhāshya 10 [1928].

Muṇḍakopanishadbhāshya 9 [1918].

Praśnopanishadbhāshya 8 [1911].

Taittirīyopanishadbhāshya 12 [1922].

Primary Sources in English Translation

*Indicates those translations which have been cited in this study.

*Alston, A.J., trans. The Realization of the Absolute: The Naiskarmya Siddhi of Sureśvara. 2nd ed. London: Shanti Sadan, 1971.

Date, Vinayak Hari, trans. Vedānta Explained, Śaṁkara's Commentary on the Brahma-sūtras. 2 vols. Bombay: Bookseller's Publishing Co., 1954.

*Gambhīrānanda, Swāmī, trans. Eight Upanishads: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya [Īśā, Kena, Kaṭha, and Taittirīya in vol. 1; Aitareya, Muṇḍaka, Maṇḍūkya and Kārikā, and Praśna in vol. 2]. 2nd ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1965-66.

*_____, trans. The Brahma-sūtra Bhāsya of Śaṅkarācārya. 3rd ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977.

Jagadananda, Swami, trans. Upadeśasāhasrī of Sri Sankaracharya (A Thousand Teachings). 5th ed. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1973.

*Jha, Ganganatha, trans. The Chāndogyopanishad (A Treatise on Vedānta Philosophy Translated into English with the Commentary of Śankara). Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1942.

*_____, trans. The Pūrva-Mimānsā-Sūtras of Jaimini: with an Original Commentary in English. Varanasi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1979.

*Mādhavānanda, Swāmī, trans. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanisad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya. 5th ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975.

*_____, trans. The Vedānta-Paribhāṣā of Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra. Belur Math, Howrah: The Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, 1972.

*Nathan, R.S., trans. Tatwa Bodh of Samkaracharya. Calcutta: Chinmaya Mission, n.d.

*Nikhilananda, Swami, trans. Vedāntasāra or The Essence of Vedānta of Sādananda Yogīndra. 6th ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974.

*Sastri, S.S. Suryanarayana, and Raja, C. Kunhan, eds. and trans. The Bhāmati of Vācaspati: on Śaṅkara's Brahmasūtrabhāṣya (Catūssutri). Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1933.

*Sastry, A. Mahadeva, trans. The Bhagavad Gita: with the Commentary of Sri Sankaracharya. Madras: Samata Books, 1977; reprint ed., 1979.

_____, trans. The Taittiriya Upanishad: with the Commentaries of Sri Sankaracharya, Sri Suresvaracharya and Sri Vidyaranya (Including Introduction to the Study of Upanishads by Sri Vidyaranya and the Atharvana Upanishads: Amritabindu, Kaivalya). Madras: Samata Books, 1980.

Sharma, Pandit Har Dutt, trans. Brahmasūtra - Catuḥsūtrī: The First Four Aphorisms of Brahmasūtras along with Śaṅkarācārya's Commentary. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, 1967.

Swāhānanda, Swāmī, trans. The Chāndogya Upanishad. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1975.

Tyāgīśānanda, Swāmī, trans. Śvetāśvataropanishad. 7th ed. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1979.

Venkararamiah, D., trans. The Pañcapādikā of Padmapāda. Gaekwad's Oriental Series, vol. 107. Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1948.

*Vidyābhūṣaṇa, M.M. Satisa Chandra, trans. The Nyāya Sūtras of Gotama. Edited by Nandalal Sinha. Allahabad, 1930; reprint ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981.

Works of Swami Vivekananda

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (Mayavati Memorial Edition). 8 vols. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama.

Vol.	I,	13th ed. 1970.
Vol.	II,	12th ed. 1971.
Vol.	III,	10th ed. 1970.
Vol.	IV,	9th ed. 1966.
Vol.	V,	9th ed. 1970.
Vol.	VI,	8th ed. 1968.
Vol.	VII,	7th ed. 1969.
Vol.	VIII,	4th ed. 1964.

Letters of Swami Vivekananda. 4th ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Alston, A.J. A Śaṃkara Source-Book.
Vol 1: Śaṃkara on the Absolute.
Vol 2: Śaṃkara on the Creation.
Vol 3: Śaṃkara on the Soul.
London: Shanti Sadan, 1980-81.

Arora, V.K. The Social and Political Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1968.

Ashby, P.H. Modern Trends in Hinduism. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

Bali, Dev Raj. Modern Indian Thought (Rammohun Roy to M.N. Roy). Delhi: Stirling Publishers, 1980.

Banerji, G.C. Keshab Chandra and Ramakrishna. Calcutta: Navavidhan, 1931.

Banerjee, N.V. The Spirit of Indian Philosophy. Delhi: Arnold Heinemann Publishers (India), 1974.

Belvalkar, S.K. Vedānta Philosophy. Poona: Bilrakunja Publishing House, 1929.

Bharati, A. "The Hindu Renaissance and Its Apologetic Patterns", Journal of Asian Studies 29 (1970), 267-87.

_____. The Light at the Centre: Context and Pretext of Modern Mysticism. California: Ross Erickson Publishers, 1976.

_____. The Tantric Tradition. London: Rider & Co., 1965.

Bhatt, G.P. Epistemology of the Bhāṭṭa School of Pūrva Mīmānsā. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1962.

Bhattacharya, A.S. Studies in Post-Śaṅkara Dialectics. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1936.

Bhattacharya, K.C. Studies in Vedāntism. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1909.

Blichfeldt, Anders. "Tantra in the Ramakrishna Math and Mission", Update 6 (1982), 30-47.

Bowes, Pratima. Hindu Intellectual Tradition. Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1977.

Buch, M.A. The Philosophy of Śaṁkara. Baroda: A.G. Widgery, 1921.

Brown, L.K. "Mission, A Cultural Confrontation: Swami Vivekananda and the American Missionary Movement", Journal of Dharma 6 (1981), 167-89.

Burke, Marie Louise. Swami Vivekananda in America New Discoveries. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1958.

Cenker, William. "The Paṇḍit: The Embodiment of Oral Tradition", Journal of Dharma 5 (1980), 237-51.

Chalmers, A.F. What is This Thing Called Science. Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1982.

Channing, W.E. The Complete Works. London: Williams & Norgate, 1880.

Chemparathy, G. An Indian Rational Theology. Vienna: De Nobili Research Library, 1972.

_____. "The Nyaya-Vaisesikas as Interpreters of Sruti", Journal of Dharma 3 (1978), 274-94.

Choudhary, K.P.S. Modern Indian Mysticism. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981.

Collet, S.D., ed. Lectures and Tracts by Keshub Chunder Sen. London: Strahan & Co., 1870.

Das, Ras-Vihari. The Essentials of Advaitism. Lahore: Motilal Banarsidass, 1933.

Das, Saroj Kumar. A Study of the Vedānta. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1937.

Das, Sisir Kumar. The Shadow of the Cross: Christianity and Hinduism in a Colonial Situation. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1974.

Dasgupta, S.N. Hindu Mysticism. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1927.

_____. Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of India Thought. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1930; reprint ed., 1974.

_____. Yoga as Philosophy and Religion. London: 1924; reprint ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978.

_____. A History of Indian Philosophy. First Indian ed. 5 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975.

Datta, D.M. Six Ways of Knowing. London: Allen & Unwin, 1932.

_____. "Testimony as a Method of Knowledge", Mind 36 (1927), 354-58.

_____. "Epistemological Methods in Indian Philosophy". In The Indian Mind, pp. 118-36. Edited by C.A. Moore. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967.

DeBary, Wm. Theodore., ed. Sources of Indian Tradition. 2 vols. New York: Columbia Univeristy Press, 1958.

De Smet, R.V. "The Theological Method of Śaṁkara". Ph.D. thesis, Gregorian University, 1953.

_____.,and Neuner, J., eds. Religious Hinduism. Allahabad: St. Paul's Publications, 1964.

_____. "Śaṅkara and Aquinas on Creation", Indian Philosophical Annual, 6 (1971), 112-18.

_____. "Śaṅkara and Aquinas on Liberation (Mukti)", Indian Philosophical Annual, 5 (1970), 239-47.

Deutsch, Eliot. Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1969.

_____.,and van Buitenen, J.A.B. A Source Book of Advaita Vedānta. Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1971.

Devaraja, N.K. An Introduction to Śaṅkara's Theory of Knowledge. 2nd ed. rev. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972.

_____. Hinduism and the Modern Age. Delhi: Islam and Modern Age Society, 1975.

Dhar, S.N. A Comprehensive Biography of Swami Vivekananda. 2 vols. Madras: Vivekananda Prakashan Kendra, 1975-76.

Doherty, Barbara Ann. "The Path to Liberation: Śaṅkara, Metaphysician, Mystic and Teacher". Ph.D. thesis, Fordham University, 1979.

Donavan, P. Interpreting Religious Experience. London: Sheldon Press, 1979.

Eastern and Western Disciples. The Life of Swami Vivekananda. 8th ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974.

Farquhar, J.N. An Outline of the Religious Literature of India. Oxford University Press, 1920; reprint ed., Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967.

_____. Modern Religious Movements in India. Indian ed. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1977.

Feuerstein, G. The Philosophy of Classical Yoga. Manchester University Press, 1980.

_____., and Miller, J. A Reappraisal of Yoga. London: Rider & Co., 1971.

Gambhirananda, Swami. The Apostles of Shri Ramakrishna. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1972.

Ganguly, N.C. Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1934.

Ghanananda, Swami. Shri Ramakrishna and His Unique Message. 3rd ed. London: The Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, 1970.

Ghanananda, Swami and Parrinder, Dr. Geoffrey., eds. Swami Vivekananda in East and West. London: The Ramakrishna Vedanta Center, 1968.

Guénon, René. Man and His Becoming According to the Vedānta. Translated by Richard C. Nicholson. New York: The Noonday Press, 1958.

Gupta, A.K., ed. Studies in the Bengal Renaissance. Calcutta: National Council of Education, 1958.

Gupta, K.P. "Religious Evolution and Social Change in India: A Study of the Ramakrishna Mission Movement", Contributions to Indian Sociology (NS) 8 (1974), 25-50.

Gupta, Mahendranath. The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Translated by Swami Nikhilananda. New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1977.

Gupta, Sanjukta. Studies in the Philosophy of Madhusūdana Saraswatī. Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1966.

Gupta, Sisir Kumar. Madhusūdana Saraswatī on the Bhagavadgītā. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977.

Hasurkar, S.S. Vācaspati Miśra on Advaita Vedānta. Darbhanga: Mithila Institute, 1958.

Heimsath, C.H. Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Hino, Shoun. Sureśvara's Vārtika on Yājñavalkya-Maitreyī Dialogue. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982.

Hiriyanna, M. Indian Philosophical Studies. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1957.

_____. Outlines of Indian Philosophy. London: Allen & Unwin, 1932; first Indian reprint ed., Bombay: Allen & Unwin, 1973.

Isherwood, C. Ramakrishna and His Disciples. 3rd ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974.

Iyer, M.K. Advaita Vedānta. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964.

James, William. The Varieties of Religious Experience. Fontana Library 1960; reprint ed., Collins, Fount Paperbacks, 1979.

Jha, Ganganatha. Pūrva Mīmāṁsā in its Sources. Benares: Benares Hindu University, 1942.

_____. The Prābhākara School of Pūrva Mīmāṁsā. Allahabad, 1911; reprint ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978.

Jones, K.W. Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Punjab. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

Jordens, J.T.F. Dayananda Saraswati. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Kattackal, Jacob. Religion and Ethics in Advaita. Frieburg: Herder, 1980.

Katz, S.T., ed. Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis. London: Sheldon Press, 1978.

Killingley, D. "Rammohun Roy's Interpretation of the Vedānta". Ph.D. thesis, London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1977.

King, Ursula. "True and Perfect Religion: Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Reinterpretation of Hinduism", Religion 7 (1977), 127-48.

_____. "Who is the Ideal Karmayogin? The Meaning of a Hindu Religious Symbol", Religion 10 (1980), 41-59.

Kopf, D. British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.

_____. The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Lavan, Spencer. Unitarians and India: A Study in Encounter and Response. Boston: Beacon Press, 1977.

Lott, E. Vedantic Approaches to God. London: Macmillan Press, 1980.

Macdonell, A.A. A Practical Sanskrit Dictionary. London: Oxford University Press, 1924.

Mahadevan, T.M.P. Outlines of Hinduism. Bombay: Chetana, 1956.

_____. Swami Vivekananda and the Indian Renaissance. Coimbatore: Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya Teachers College, 1965.

_____. The Philosophy of Advaita. 3rd ed. Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1969.

_____.,ed. Preceptors of Advaita. Secunderabad: Kanchi Kamakoti Sankara Mandir, 1968.

_____. "The Place of Reason and Revelation in the Philosophy of an Early Advaitin". In Proceedings of the Tenth Philosophical Congress of Philosophy, Amsterdam, August 11-18, 1948, pp. 247-55. Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1949.

Majumdar, R.C., ed. Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume. Calcutta: Swami Vivekananda Centenary Committee, 1963.

_____. History of the Freedom Movement in India. 3 vols. Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962-63.

Malkani, G.R. Vedantic Epistemology. Amalner: The Indian Institute of Philosophy, 1953.

Matchett, Freda. "The Teaching of Ramakrishna in Relation to the Hindu Tradition and as Interpreted by Vivekananda", Religion 11 (1981), 171-84.

Mazumdar, A.K. Understanding Vivekananda. Calcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1972.

Mazoomdar, P.C. The Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen. Calcutta: J.W. Thomas, Baptist Mission Press, 1887.

Menon, Y.K., and Allen, R.F. The Pure Principle: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Shankara. Michigan State University Press, 1960.

Mital, S.S. The Social and Political Ideas of Swami Vivekananda. Delhi: Metropolitan Book Co., 1979.

Mitra, Sisirkumar. Resurgent India. Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1963.

Monier-Williams, M. A Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1899; reprint ed., 1974.

_____. A Dictionary English and Sanskrit. 4th Indian ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976. reprint ed., 1982.

Mukherjee, S.K. "Śaṁkara on the Limits of Empirical Knowledge", Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute 12 (1930-31), 64-70.

_____. "Śaṅkara on the Relation between the Vedas and Reason", Indian Historical Quarterly 6 (1930), 108-13.

_____. "Śaṁkara on Empirical and Transcendental Knowledge", Journal of the Department of Letters, University of Calcutta 21 (1931), 1-30.

Mukhopadhyay, A.K., The Bengali Intellectual Tradition. Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Co., 1979.

Murty, K. Satchidananda. Revelation and Reason in Advaita. Andhra University and Columbia University Press, 1959; reprint ed., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974.

Neevel, Walter G (JR). "The Transformation of Śrī Rāmakrishna". In Hinduism: New Essays in the History of Religions, pp. 53-97. Edited by Bardwell L. Smith. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976.

Nikhilananda, Swami. Vivekananda. 3rd Indian ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975.

Nivedita, Sister. The Master as I Saw Him. 12th ed. Calcutta: Udbodhan Office, 1977.

O'Neil, Thomas L. Māyā in Śaṅkara: Measuring the Immeasurable. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

Organ, T.W. The Hindu Quest for the Perfection of Man. First Paperbound ed. Ohio: Ohio University, 1980.

_____. Hinduism. New York: Barron's Educational Series, 1974.

_____. The Self in Indian Philosophy. London: Mouton & Co., 1964.

Panikkar, K.M. The Foundations of New India. London: Allen & Unwin, 1963.

_____. Hinduism and the West. Chandigarh: Panjab University Publications Bureau, 1964.

Parker, Theodore, The Collected Works. Edited by Frances Power Cobbe. 12 vols. London: Trübner & Co., 1863-65.

Parrinder, G. Mysticism in the World's Religions. London: Sheldon Press, 1976.

Phillips, C.H., and Wainwright, M.D., eds. Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernization. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1976.

Poddar, A. Renaissance in Bengal. 2 vols. Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970-77.

Potter, K.H., ed. The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies.
Vol 1: Bibliography.
Vol 3: Advaita Vedānta.
Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981.

Prabhavananda, Swami. The Spiritual Heritage of India London: Allen & Uniwn, 1962.

Prithipal, D. Advaita Vedānta. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969.

Radhakrishnan, S. The Hindu View of Life. London: Allen & Unwin, 1927. Unwin Paperbacks, 1980.

_____. Indian Philosophy. 2 vols. London: Allen & Unwin, 1971.

Rai, Lajpat. A History of the Arya Samaj. Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1967.

Ramachandran, T.P. The Concept of the Vyāvahārika in Advaita Vedānta. Madras: University of Madras, 1969.

Rao, R. Śaṅkara. Mysore: Kaivalya Publications, 1960.

Rao, K.S. Ramakrishna. Advaita as Philosophy and Religion. Prasaranga: University of Mysore, 1969.

Ray, Ajit Kumar. The Religious Ideas of Rammohun Roy. Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1976.

Ray, B.G. Religious Movements in Modern Bengal. Santiniketan: Visva-Bharati, 1965.

Rolland, R. The Life of Ramakrishna. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974.

_____. The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1975.

Rosselli, J. "Sri Ramakrishna and the Educated Elite of Late Nineteenth Century Bengal", Contributions to Indian Sociology (N.S.) 12 (1978), 195-212.

Roy, S.S. The Heritage of Śaṁkara. Allahabad: Udayana Publications, 1965.

Saksena, S. "Authority in Indian Philosophy", Philosophy East and West 1 (1951), 38-47.

Saradananda, Swami. Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master. Translated by Swami Jagadananda. 5th revised ed. 2 vols. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978-79.

Saraswati, Swami Satchidanandendra. How to Recognize the Method of Vedānta. Holenarsipur: The Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, 1964.

Saraswati, Swami Dayananda. An Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas. Translated by Pt. Ghasi Ram. Delhi: Jan Gyan Prakashan, 1973.

Sastri, Kokileswar. An Introduction to Adwaita Philosophy. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1926.

Sastri, Sivanath. History of the Brahmo Samaj. 2nd ed. Calcutta: Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, 1974.

Satprakashananda, Swami. Methods of Knowledge. London: Allen & Unwin, 1965; first Indian ed. Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974.

Sen Gupta, A. Samkhya and Advaita Vedanta. Lucknow: Manoranjan Sen, 'Gour Ashram', 1973.

Sengupta, B.K. A Critique on the Vivarna School. Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyaya, 1959.

Sen Keshub Chunder. Lectures and Tracts. Edited by S.D. Collet. London: Strahan & Co., Publishers, 1870.

_____. Discourses and Writings. Calcutta: Brahmo Tract Society, 1904.

_____. The New Dispensation or Religion of Harmony. Calcutta: Bidhan Press, 1903.

Sharma, C. A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.

Sharma, I.C. Ethical Philosophies of India. London: Allen & Unwin, 1965.

Sharma, P.S. Anthology of Kumārilabhatta's Works. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

Singh, R.P. The Vedānta of Śaṅkara - a Metaphysics of Value, vol. 1. Jaipur: Bharat Publishing House, 1949.

_____. "Radhakrishnan's Substantial Reconstruction of the Vedānta of Śaṁkara", Philosophy East and West 16 (1966), 5-32.

Sircar, Mahendranath. Comparative Studies in Vedantism. Bombay: Humphrey Milford, 1927.

Smart, Ninian. Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy. London: Allen & Unwin, 1964.

_____. The Yogi and the Devotee. London: Allen & Unwin, 1968.

_____. "Interpretation and Mystical Experience", Religious Studies 1 (1965), 75-87.

Sri Ramakrishna Math. Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1975.

Srivastava, R.S. Contemporary Indian Philosophy. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1965.

Sundaram, P.K. Advaita Epistemology With Special Reference to Iṣṭasiddhi. Madras: University of Madras, 1968.

Swami Vivekananda Centenary Committee. Parliament of Religions, Calcutta (1963-64). Calcutta: Swami Vivekananda Centenary Committee, 1965.

Tagore, Debendranath. Brahmo Dharma. Translated by Hem Chandra Sarkar. Calcutta: H.C. Sarkar, 1928.

Upadhyaya, V.P. Lights on Vedānta. Varanasi: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1959.

Urquhart, W.S. The Vedānta and Modern Thought. London: Oxford University Press, 1928.

Vivekananda Prakashan Kendra. The Indian Renaissance. Madras: Vivekananda Prakashan Kendra, 1978.

Warrier, A.G. Krishna. The Concept of Mukti in Advaita Vedānta. Madras: Univeristy of Madras, 1961.

Williams, George M. The Quest for Meaning in Swāmī Vīvekānanda. California: New Horizons Press, 1978.

Zaehner, R.C. Hinduism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

_____. Hindu and Muslim Mysticism. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1960; New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

_____. Mysticism Sacred and Profane. Clarendon Press, 1957; reprint ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Zimmer, H. Philosophies of India. New York: Pantheon Books, 1951.

GLOSSARY

The following list does not include all of the Sanskrit terms used in this study. It is a selection only of the more technical terms used in Advaita Vedānta. All of the Sanskrit terms, however, are fully explained in the text itself. It is very difficult to give literal translations of important Advaita concepts and the following explanations should not be regarded as substitutes for the detailed discussion of each term in the text.

abhyāsa:
अभ्यास

repetition; one of the sixfold criteria used in Advaita for determining the purport of śruti passages; the frequent repetition of a text is seen as an indication of its importance.

adhikārī:
अधिकारी

a qualified student or spiritual aspirant.

adhyāropa:
अध्यारोप

wrong attribution of the qualities of one entity upon another.

adhyāsa:
अध्यास

superimposition; in Advaita the term is used to describe the erroneous identification of brahman with the qualities of the body and mind.

Advaita:
अद्वैत

literally, "non-duality"; the school of thought systematized and expounded by Shankara.

āgama:
आगम

traditional text or doctrine; sometimes used as a synonym for the śruti.

āgāmi karma:
आगामि कर्म

the results of actions done in the present and those likely to be done in the future.

ahaṃkāra:
अहङ्कार

ego or "I" notion.

ajahallakshaṇā:
अजहल्लक्षणा

a non-exclusive form of implication, in which both the primary and implied meanings of a word or sentence are taken into consideration in order to arrive at its meaning.

ajñāna:
अज्ञान

ignorance, error, or invalid cognition.

akhaṇḍārthaka vākyam:
अखण्डार्थक वाक्यम

a sentence or statement positing identity between subject and predicate.

anādi:
अनादि

that which is without beginning; eternal.

ānanda:
आनन्द

Bliss; the very nature of brahman in Advaita.

anantam:
अनन्तम

limitless, boundless, eternal.

anitya:
अनित्य

impermanent, changing, transient.

antaḥkaraṇa:
अन्तःकरण

literally, "the internal organ"; used as a general designation for the mind and all of its functions.

anubhava:
अनुभव

experience, firm opinion; the term is also used to designate knowledge gained from any valid source other than memory.

anumāna:
अनुमान

inference; one of the six sources of valid knowledge accepted by Advaita.

anupalabdhi:
अनुपलब्धि

non-cognition; one of the six sources of valid knowledge accepted by Advaita.

aparā vidyā:
अपरा विद्या

literally, "lower knowledge"; in Advaita, it includes all kinds of knowledge other than that of brahman; the latter alone is posited as leading directly to moksha.

aparoksha:
अपरोक्ष

literally, "not invisible"; used as an adjective of jñāna, it signifies knowledge which is directly and immediately gained.

apaurusheya:
अपौरुषेय

that which is not of human origin or nature; it is used as a description of the śruti to distinguish it from texts having a human origin.

apavāda:
अपवाद

negation or refutation; in Advaita it refers to the negation, through knowledge, of qualities wrongly superimposed on brahman.

apramā:
अप्रमा

invalid or incorrect knowledge.

āpta:
आप्त

a credible, trustworthy or authoritative person.

āptavākya:
आप्तवाक्य

the statement of an authoritative person.

apūrva:
अपूर्व

novelty; one of the sixfold criteria used in Advaita for determining the purport of śruti-passages; the idea here is that if the subject is knowable through other pramānas, it cannot be the central purport of the the śruti; śruti aims only to inform us of things which we cannot know otherwise.

arthāpatti:
अर्थापत्ति

postulation; one of the six sources of knowledge accepted in Advaita.

arthavāda:
अर्थवाद

praise or commendation; one of the sixfold criteria used in Advaita for determining the purport of the śruti; the term is also used in Pūrva-Mīmānsā to describe Vedic sentences which subserve injunctions by praising the act or its result.

asat:
असत

unreal, impermanent, false; the opposite of sat.

ātman: आत्मन	the individual Self; in Advaita the ātman is posited as being identical with brahman.
ātmajñāna: आत्मज्ञान	knowledge of the ātman; synonymous with ātmavidyā.
avidyā: अविद्या	ignorance, misapprehension, erroneous knowledge; in Advaita it especially denotes erroneous knowledge about the nature of the ātman.
avidyānivṛitti: अविद्यानिवृत्ति	the removal or negation of ignorance by knowledge.
bhāshya: भाष्य	a commentary or explanatory work.
brahmajijñāsā: ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा	inquiry (especially into the śruti texts) about the nature of brahman.
brahmajñāna: ब्रह्मज्ञान	the knowledge of brahman; synonymous with brahmavidyā.
brahman: ब्रह्मन	the limitless reality; identical, in Advaita, with the ātman.
brahmanishṭham: ब्रह्मनिष्ठम	the state of being established in the knowledge of brahman; a qualification of the spiritual teacher in Advaita.
caitanya/cit: चैतन्य /चित	Awareness or Consciousness; the nature of the Self in Advaita.
citta śuddhi: चित्त शुद्धि	the purity of the mind; a precondition, in Advaita, for the knowledge of brahman.
dṛik: दृक्	the Knower, Subject or Seer; the nature of the ātman in Advaita, emphasizing that It cannot be objectified.
guṇa: गुण	quality or attribute; merit or excellence.

indriya: इन्द्रिय	organ, especially sense organ.
Īśvara: ईश्वर	the Lord; the impersonal brahman conceived of as Creator and Ruler of the universe, and possessing the qualities of omnipotence and omniscience.
jaḍa: जड़	insentient or inert; the opposite of caitanya.
jāgarita-avasthā: जागरित अवस्था	the waking state.
jahadajahallakshaṇā: जहदजहल्लक्षणा	an exclusive-non-exclusive type of implication, in which only part of the original meaning of a word or sentence is retained, while the rest is rejected; this is the kind of implication used in Advaita for the exegesis of "tat tvam asi"; it is also referred to as bhāgalakshaṇā.
jahallakshaṇā: जहल्लक्षणा	an exclusive type of implication, in which the primary meaning of a word or sentence is abandoned in favour of its implied meaning.
jijñāsā: जिज्ञासा	inquiry, especially into the meaning of the śruti.
jijñāsu: जिज्ञासु	one who inquires (or desires to)
jīvanmukta: जिवन्मुक्त	literally, "living free"; in Advaita, the term is used to describe one who retlains the body after attaining moksha; such a person enjoys a sense of freedom and fullness in spite of the limitations of the body.
jñāna: ज्ञान	this term literally signifies any kind of cognition, without regard to the question of truth or error; it is generally used, however, to designate valid knowledge.
jñānī: ज्ञानी	the one who possess valid (esp. spiritual) knowledge.

jñānakāṇḍa:
ज्ञानकाण्ड

final sections of the Vedas (viz. the Upanishads), seen in Advaita as having an independent purport in revealing the knowledge of brahman.

kāraṇa:
कारण

cause or instrument.

karmajijñāsā:
कर्मजिज्ञासा

inquiry or investigation into the first sections of the Vedas dealing with the performance of rituals.

karmakāṇḍa:
कर्मकाण्ड

first sections of the Vedas dealing with the performance of ritual actions; seen, in Advaita, as having a different aim and result from the jñānakāṇḍa.

kshetra:
क्षेत्र

literally, "the field"; this term is used in the Bhagavadgītā (13:1) to refer to the body and, by extension, to any object other than the ātman.

kshetrajña:
क्षेत्रज्ञ

literally, "the knower of the field"; used in the Bhagavadgītā (13:1) to define the ātman, pointing out Its nature as the Subject or Knower.

lakshaṇā:
लक्षणा

definition; indirect or implied meaning; in the latter sense it constitutes an important principle of exegesis in Advaita.

lakshyārtha:
लक्ष्यार्थ

secondary or implied meaning of a word or sentence.

mahāvākya:
महावाक्य

literally, "great sentence"; Advaita holds four such sentences, taken from the four Vedas, to be especially meaningful in positing the identity of ātman and brahman; one of the best known is "tat tvam asi".

manana:
मनन

thinking or reflection; in Advaita, it describes the process of pondering over the meaning of the śruti with the aid of reason.

moksha:
मोक्ष

literally, "freedom", generally from the cycle of birth and death; in Advaita this freedom is conceived as being coincident with the knowledge of brahman, and attainable while living in the body.

mukhyārtha:
मुख्यार्थ

literal or direct meaning of a word or sentence; its opposite is lakshyārtha.

mumukshutvam:
मुमुक्षुत्वम

the desire for the attainment of moksha; one of the preconditions for the gain of knowledge in Advaita.

mumukshu:
मुमुक्षु

the spiritual aspirant who earnestly desires moksha.

naiyāyika:
नैयायिक

a follower of the Nyāya system of Indian philosophy.

neti neti:
नेति नेति

literally, "not this, not this"; this Upanishadic statement is seen in Advaita as a negative method of defining brahman by denying all false attributes or specifications.

nididhyāsana:
निदिध्यासन

contemplation or attentive thinking.

nimitta kāraṇa:
निमित्त कारण

the intelligent or efficient cause, as distinguished from the material cause (upādāna kāraṇa).

nirguṇa:
निर्गुण

devoid of all qualities; the nature of brahman in Advaita.

nirvikalpa:
निर्विकल्प

free from change or differences; without modifications.

nishedha:
निषेध

prohibitions; applied by Pūrva-Mīmāṇsā to statements in the Vedas instituting restraint from acts opposed to dharma, and seen by this school as having an independent authority.

nitya: नित्य	changeless or eternal.
pāramārthika sattā: पारमार्थिक सत्ता	absolute existence or reality, characteristic, in Advaita, of brahman alone.
paratah-prāmāṇya-vāda: परतः प्रामाण्य वाद	Nyāya doctrine of the extrinsic validity of knowledge.
paratah-prakāśa-vāda: परतः प्रकाश वाद	Pūrva-Mīmāṇsā doctrine of the extrinsic luminosity of knowledge; one of the important epistemological differences of this school with Advaita.
parā vidyā: परा विद्या	literally, "higher or supreme knowledge"; used in Advaita to refer to the knowledge of brahman, which alone leads to moksha.
paroksha: परोक्ष	literally, "invisible"; used as an adjective of jñāna, it signifies mediate or indirect knowledge.
paurusheya: पौरुषेय	that which is of human nature or origin; used as a definition of the smriti texts to distinguish their origin from the śruti.
phala: फल	fruit or result; one of the sixfold criteria used in Advaita for determining the purport of śruti passages; the proposal in a passage of a distinct result is seen as evidence of its independent authoritativeness.
pramā: प्रमा	valid knowledge.
pramāṇa: प्रमाण	a source of valid knowledge; six such sources are accepted in Advaita.
pramātṛi: प्रमातृ	perceiver or cognizer.
prameya: पमेय	an object of knowledge.

pramiti:
प्रमिति

a correct notion or cognition; knowledge gained by the application of a valid pramāṇa.

prārabdha karma:
प्रारब्ध कर्म

the results of actions which have given rise to, and are currently being experienced in this particular birth.

prasaṃkhyāna:
प्रसंख्यान

reflection, contemplation, meditation.

prātibhāsika sattā:
प्रातिभासिक सत्ता

illusory existence, such as that belonging to a mirage or any optical illusion.

pratyaksha:
प्रत्यक्ष

perception; one of the six sources of valid knowledge in Advaita.

Pūrva-Mīmāṇsā:
पूर्व मीमांसा

school of Vedic exegesis founded by Jaimini, and concerned with the analysis of the first (pūrva) or ritualistic section (karmakāṇda) of the Vedas.

pūrvapaksha:
पूर्वपक्ष

the first objection to an assertion in any discussion; a series of such objections are generally proposed by Shankara in his commentaries.

rishi:
ऋषि

inspired poet or sage; thought of in Hinduism as the ones to whom the Vedas were originally revealed.

śabda:
शब्द

sound or word.

śabda-pramāṇa:
शब्द प्रमाण

a means of valid knowledge consisting of words; identified, in Advaita, with the śruti and posited as one of the six sources of knowledge.

śabda-pramā:
शाब्द प्रमा

knowledge derived from śabda-pramāna.

sādhana-catushṭaya:
साधन चतुष्टय

the fourfold disciplines proposed in Advaita as preparatory for the successful gain of knowledge from the śruti.

saguṇa (brahman):
सगुण

with qualities; brahman conceived of as Creator of the universe, and possessing all good qualities.

sākshi:
साक्षि

Witness; the nature of brahman in Advaita.

samādhi:
समाधि

literally, "putting together"; concentration or meditation; the eighth and last stage in the Yoga system of Patañjali.

sāmānya jñāna:
सामान्य ज्ञान

knowledge of a very general kind, lacking in specificity.

saṃcita karma:
संचित कर्म

the sum total of the results of actions done in all previous existences, and yet to bear fruit.

saṃsāra:
संसार

cycle of successive births and deaths, freedom from which constitutes moksha.

śāstra:
शास्त्र

any manual of teaching or sacred text; the term is often used as a synonym for the śruti.

sat:
सत

that which really is; absolute existence; the nature of brahman in Advaita.

savikalpa:
सविकल्प

with modifications or differences; determinate; the opposite is nirvikalpa.

shaḍliṅga:
षड्लिङ्ग

the sixfold exegetical criteria employed in Advaita for determining the purport of the śruti.

siddhānta:
सिद्धान्त

the established or demonstrated conclusion of an argument.

śishya:
शिष्य

student or disciple.

smṛiti:
स्मृति

literally, "memory"; name given to the whole body of religious texts other than the śruti; smṛiti texts are subservient to the authority of the śruti because of their human origin.

śraddhā:
श्रद्धा

faith; faith in the authority of the śruti as a source of valid knowledge, and in the teacher who unfolds its meaning is an important prerequisite for the gain of knowledge in Advaita.

śravaṇa:
श्रवण

the act of listening or hearing; in Advaita, it signifies the acquisition of knowledge by listening to the words of the śruti as unfolded by the spiritual teacher.

śrotriya:
श्रोत्रिय

one who is well versed in the meaning of the śruti; a qualification of the teacher in Advaita.

śruti:
श्रुति

literally, "that which is heard"; synonym for the Vedas, emphasizing that they were transmitted orally from teacher to student; unlike the smṛiti texts, śruti is posited as having a non-human origin.

sthita-prajña:
स्थित प्रज्ञ

one who is firm or well-established in Self-knowledge.

sushupti avasthā:
सुषुप्ति अवस्था

the state of deep sleep.

svapna avasthā:
स्वप्न अवस्था

the dream state.

svarūpa lakshaṇa:
स्वरूप लक्षण

a definition which points out the essential or intrinsic nature of its object.

svataḥ-prāmāṇya-vāda:
स्वतः प्रामाण्य वाद

Advaita and Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā doctrine of the self-validity of knowledge.

svataḥ-prakāśa-vāda:
स्वतः प्रकाश वाद

Advaita doctrine of the self-luminosity of knowledge.

tarka:
तर्क

reason or logic.

taṭastha lakshaṇa:
तटस्थ लक्षण

a definition which points out the non-essential or accidental characteristics of its object.

tātparya:
तात्पर्य

purport, intention or meaning of a scriptural text; in Advaita this is determined by the application of the sixfold exegetical criteria, on the basis of which they contend that the tātparya of the Upanishads is the revelation of the non-dual brahman.

upādāna kāraṇa:
उपादान कारण

the material cause, as distinguished from the efficient cause (nimitta kāraṇa).

upādhi:
उपाधि

a substitute or anything which may be taken for or has the appearance of another thing; in Advaita, the term is applied to all qualities and characteristics wrongly attributed to brahman, but which neither belong to, nor limit brahman.

upakramopasaṃhārau:
उपक्रमोपसंहारौ

the beginning and the end; one of the sixfold criteria used in Advaita for determining the purport of śruti texts; the initial and concluding statements of any passage are considered to be especially important in determining its meaning.

upalakshaṇa:
उपलक्षण

a non-essential attribute or quality.

upamāna:
उपमान

comparison; one of the six sources of valid knowledge accepted by Advaita.

upapatti:
उपपत्ति

reasonableness; one of the sixfold criteria employed in Advaita for determining the meaning of śruti passages; the interpretation more satisfactory to reason is given priority when determining the purport of any text.

upāsanā:
उपासना

the act of sitting or being near at hand; service, homage, adoration, worship, meditation.

Uttara-Mīmāṇsā:
उत्तर मीमांसा

literally, "later or higher inquiry"; term applied to the study of the last section of the Vedas (viz. the Upanishads or jñānakānda) as distinguished from inquiry into the first section of the Vedas (viz. karmakānda) dealing with ritual; often used as a synonym for the system of Vedānta.

vākya:
वाक्य

a sentence or statement.

Vedānta:
वेदान्त

literally, "the end of the Vedas"; general term applied to the last sections of the Vedas (viz. the Upanishads, and to all systems of thought based on their interpretation.

Vedānta-vākya:
वेदान्त वाक्य

sentences of the Upanishads, seen in Advaita as having an independent purport in revealing the nature of brahman.

vidhi:
विधि

injunctions; applied by Pūrva-Mīmānsā to Vedic statements inculcating the performance of acts for the attainment of dharma; the Vedas, according to this school, are only concerned with prescribing acts for the attainment of dharma.

viśesha jñāna:
विशेष ज्ञान

knowledge of a specific or detailed nature; its opposite is sāmānya jñāna.

vritti:
वृत्ति

any modification or change occurring in the mind.

vyāvahārika sattā:
व्यावहारिक सत्ता

empirical reality or existence, such as that attributed, in Advaita, to the world; distinguished from the absolute reality of brahman and the entirely illusory existence of a mirage.

yukti:
युक्ति

reason or argument.