

The Inexplicable Pure-Consciousness of Advaita Vedānta as a Realm of Silence: A Contemporary Approach

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the reiteration and re-emphasis of the ineffable nature of ŚrīĀdiŚaṅkaraĀcārya's Nirguṇa Brahman - the ineffable immutable, partless, distinctionless and non-relational infinite absolute which the inability of mind, logic and language to comprehend it is its self-evidence. It closely follows what ŚrīSuresvaraĀcārya had considered as a self-evident absolute truth revealed in the Upaniṣadic texts, and as such the task of the Advaitins is only confined to refuting criticisms against such an ultimate reality. Wittingly or unwittingly, what is generally observed is that, such a reality that is negatively understood as 'pure-consciousness' or the absolute 'bare ground' (adhīsthānamātra) that underlies or implied by or inescapably presupposed by every bit of the depth and range of human experience can never be grasped in the relational terms of 'knower and known relationship' (jñāta-jñeya or pramāta-prameyasaṁbandha) is still unnoticed. Perhaps, it is this epistemic paradox which Sir Roger Penrose realised when he firmly concluded that, human understanding or consciousness as the underlying basis of every mathematical operation etc., accordingly it can never be reduced to or understood in computational terms. This issue is what this paper seeks to deliberate as a reiteration in the light of some possible methodological approach of comparative analysis involving Edmund Husserl's conception of consciousness and Heidegger's logos or discourse. A fact which has so far been lying unexplored is that, though Heidegger's ontological phenomenology in its path breaking existential orientations avoids the concepts like consciousness, subject, I, ego, mind and object etc, his idea of logos as a part of the fundamental analysis of the existential structure of Dasein as the 'correct mode of access' to the non-dualistic Being seems to have some affinity with Śaṅkara's examination of the 'self-showing' (Heidegger's) characters of the things of the world conveyed by his asti, bhāti and priyam as the corresponding empirical terms of the self-established (nityasiddha or svataḥsiddha) and self-revealing knowledge (svaprakāsatva) nature of sat, cit and ānanda. These may be compared with Heidegger's logos as the 'act of letting the self-showing of the nature of things be seen by the seeing of Dasein' which without being a knowing subject, it understands the 'self-manifestation' of the underlying implicit ontological truth about the non-dichotomic Being. This agrees with the epistemological theory of the self-evident theory of Advaita. No one to one correspondence between the philosophy and Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta and Heidegger's philosophy of existentially oriented ontological phenomenology or even that of Husserl's consciousness is assumed by this paper. This task is carried out only to reiterate or re-emphasise the 'indescribable' but 'the ever-present truth' of Nirguṇa Brahman as the 'Cinmātra-pure awareness' underlying as the 'unconditioned condition' of all forms of human experience.

Key words: Adhiṣṭhānamātra, nityasiddha or svataḥsiddha, svaprakāsatva, logos, svataḥpramāṇyavāda, be seen, seeing, asti, bhāti, priyam, non-computationality.

INTRODUCTION

The essential purpose of this paper is to discuss the possible and necessary justification of the philosophical formulation of the essential nature (Svarūpa-Lakṣaṇa) of the fundamental metaphysical and spiritual foundation of the non-dual thesis of ĀdiŚaṅkarācārya. According to ŚrīSuresvaraĀcāryain his *Naiskarmyasiddhi* (THE NAIṢKARMYASIDDHI OF SUREŚVARA, 1988) what Śaṅkara and he did were confined only to the task of refutations of the criticisms against the central theme of Brahman-Ātman as the one and non-dual ultimate self-revealed reality discussed in the Upaniṣads as the Verbal Testimony (Śruti or ŚabdaPramāṇa). Since, it has been a point of contention for many leading modern Indian philosophers, though it cannot be discussed in detail in this paper, as a passing reference, it is pertinent to mention that, it is still necessary to make its proper justification as the sole means of obtaining the higher knowledge (parājñāna/vidyā) of the supreme spiritual truth. To begin with, it is debatable whether or not, the eternal philosophical spiritual contents of the JñānaKāṇḍa, the Upaniṣadic sections of the Vedic texts are merely dealing with the subject matters of blind faith and whatever the philosophers of Advaita say involve the fallacy of the prior assumption of what is to be proved (*pūrvakaḥpanā*) and *circular reasoning*. This issue was known to the ancient philosophers of Advaita, and it was discussed by Śaṅkara and Sureśvara with reference to Śruti and Yuki, and the debates are still continuing even today. Classical Indian philosophy-especially Vedānta has been totally ignored by the leading modern western philosophers as dogma, and no Indian philosophical texts are ever cited in their works. Many pro-western philosophy contemporary Indian philosophers on the basis of their acceptance of the western philosophical standards and empirical method of science, argue that, the spiritual theme of the Upaniṣads are blind faith. It has been treated as purely of theological issue, and that the classical philosophy in general and Vedānta in particular have nothing to offer in terms of philosophical significance. Unless this ice is broken, the repetitive academic events on Vedānta will be a sheer waste of time and energy. It is only in this respect that, this paper sets out a comparative study of the essential thesis of Advaita – especially its implications of the philosophy of consciousness, philosophy of mind – both traditional and positivists and show it's the contemporary relevance. They have to understand in what way Śaṅkara's provisional definition of Brahman-Ātman as pure-existence-consciousness-bliss which is to be understood negatively is of theoretical importance. In contemporary terms it is necessary to discuss Advaita's pure consciousness in the light of Husserl's Phenomenology and Heidegger's counterpart. In this context Prof. R. Balasubramanian in his lengthy Introduction to *Naiskarmyasiddhi*, Uses Husserl's Phenomenology and certain technical terms of Heidegger as a kind of synthesis. He says-Śaṅkara's philosophy of Advaita deals with Transcendental Phenomenology in the sense of the pure consciousness as an *apriori* or *given* and to that extent it is presuppositionless suggested by the expression it is the "Metaphysics of Experience". What is important is his adaptation of Heidegger's *grounding tactics* of *regressive analysis* to explain the negative logical reasoning of Advaita. What is interesting for this paper is that, this approach of Heidegger is a *negative method* observed in his three *deficient characteristics*. Yet, unlike Śaṅkara, Heidegger did never use positive or negative logic or avoided the words like subject, *object and consciousness or mind etc*. While Heidegger did apply his *negative method* of *regressive analysis* as a

grounding tactics only to *unconceal* the holistic totality of the existential character of Being with reference to the ‘worldhood of the world’ via his non-propositional method of *logos* in and through the analysis of the existential character of Dasein as the correct mode of access to the truth about Being. In the philosophy of Vedānta also the process of inquiry to establish Brahman-Ātman begins with the examination of the nature of the embodied self and it is what is meant by the description of the Brahma Sutra as Śārirakamīmāṃsā. The holism of Heidegger which rejects Descartes’ subject and object duality was anticipated in Advaita though the former did not deal with spiritual truth in his philosophy. Śaṅkara’s *negative reasoning* based on *neti neti* as a regressive analysis and self-destructive in nature which uses logical judgments only to show the inherent inconsistencies of positive logical reasoning and suggest that, series of negations of negative logical reasoning intuitively affirms their underlying grounding structure of the invariable common witness consciousness of both absence and presence.

Keeping in view of these few points, the paper will discuss the difference between intuition and intellect, and the lurking idealist implications in the minds of the great creative men of genius in science etc. These issues are deemed as necessary for a contemporary reading of the philosophy of Advaita. The above points are some of the preludes which the paper will try to adumbrate in detail in the following sections.

What remains as the basic question of this paper is to find the possible but understandable answers to the question as to how are Advaita’s absolute as pure Being or Bare Existence, Pure Consciousness and Pure Bliss etc. possible. Since, the school’s philosophy has a lot of logical and phenomenological issues that have a lot of relevance to the philosophical issues of consciousness which is now revived. Therefore this paper will ignore the critics’ view dealt with the book-p- ‘*What is Living and What is Dead in Indian philosophy*’ (Chattopadhyaya, D. 1993) & Devaraja, N.K. (1976). Many contemporary Indian philosophers openly attack the concept of mokṣa and traditional Indian spiritual philosophy as dead ideas. But this paper will only discuss pure consciousness of Advaita and its relevance to the contemporary issues of consciousness debated between the traditional philosophers and the physicalist theorists of consciousness which has now entered into the field of quantum physics. These issues will become evident as the paper continues.

1 Śruti- Verbal Testimony, Yukti- Reasoning and Cinmātra - Pure Consciousness

Despite the intuitive source of the metaphysical truth of the Upaniṣads as the self-illuminated non-dual spiritual truth, that the ancient philosophers of Advaita were aware of its possibility or impossibility was evident from the fundamental philosophical questions and issues in the relation between intuitive nature of the spiritual truth of the verbal testimony (Śruti or ŚabdaPramāṇa) and the demands for its rational justifications (yukti). It means, intellectual and rational thinking were never ignored in the Upaniṣads. They are deliberated upon as dialogues between teachers and students, father and son and husband and wife etc. There are signs of proto-logical principles, openness of the philosophical bent of mind and the urge to delve into its deeper metaphysical questions. The central theme of Brahman-Ātman was not a pure matter of blind theological faith. Almost all the basic metaphysical queries are found in the metaphysico-spiritual reflections of the ancient, sages and saints recorded in the Upaniṣadic texts. Despite their philosophical and spiritual experience being rooted in the intuitive flash in their highly fertile, spiritually and aesthetically sensitive minds there are strong indications of their being aware of the need for providing satisfactory intellectual fulfillment demanded by the human minds. In Advaita Vedānta, this is discussed with reference to Verbal Testimony and Reason. Yet, in the history of the philosophy of religion, both western and Indian or oriental or eastern, in the

language of Aquinas, the problem of linking *faith* and *reason* and in Advaita Vedānta his *faith* in a way comes closer to śraddhā. For the ancient seers etc. of the Upaniṣad though *faith* is still a necessity as something to start with *critical reasoning* always follows it and the debates were always left as open ended issues (The Brahma Sūtra - THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRITUAL LIFE, 1960, 105). The contemporary meanings of *intellect* and *reason* are not one and the same for Aquinas. For him *intellect* means- *intuitive knowing* and, *reason* is *discursive thinking, inquiry* and *discourse* (Ibid). The idealistic orientation of the ‘Modes of Consciousness’ of the Upaniṣads comprises (1) sense perception, (2) logical understanding and (3) intuitive insight (Ibid). For Plotinus, the human individual is complex system of the *trinity of body, soul* and *spirit* which serve as the basis of *sense* (experience), *discursive thought*, and *spiritual knowledge* (Ibid). For F.H. Bradley, “*logical thought is inadequate to the grasp of reality...the real is not the rational and (it) cannot be reduced to an earthly ballet of bloodless categories*”. The spiritual experience of the reality for him is a ‘*supra-rational experience of which an earnest is found in the immediacy of feeling*’ (Ibid). Radhakrishnan in his *An Idealist View of Life* calls them as static, discursive, plodding, faltering, abstract and lifeless with reference to his making a distinction between *Intellect* and *Intuition*. Religious experience confirms, illuminates man’s consciousness of the ultimate as the mystery that permeates everything, embraces everything, and completes everything (Ibid). Dr. S. Radhakrishnan says that, ‘Intuitive consciousness is called *pratibhā* or *arṣa-jñāna* or *parā-saṁvit*, and has the characteristics of immediacy and clarity. It is independent of sense perception and inference. It is ‘*synoptic* not *analytic* and *noetic* not *discursive*’.

The above views of the uncommon and creative experience of the intuitive awareness of a new truth even in science or higher mathematical thinking can hardly be explained within the epistemological theory of the dualistic modern western philosophy wherein a knowing subject and the object he or she knows are two mutually contradictory entities. In some way or the other, just as the expression- *like knows like* (*homoioishomoion*) in the ancient Greek philosophical principle says, unless there is some sense of essential conformity between the knower and known, no true cognition or knowledge is possible because of the dualistic opposition between knower and known. In similar way, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad’s text says – ‘*Sayovaiparamaṁ brahma vedabrahmaivabhavati/- Indeed, he who knows Brahman becomes Brahman Itself*’ (3.2.9). It is also corroborated by the ‘Cchāṅdogy Upaniṣad text, 11.3.14.1- *Sarvam khalvidam brahma- All this is Brahman. From it the universe comes forth, in it the universe merges and in it the universe breaths*’ (An Initiative by Vande Mataram Library Trust, VMLT 2024). In terms of Advaita epistemology this may be explained in the light of the fact that, as the infinite and all pervasive (*sarvavyāpaka*) impersonal absolute, both the embodied individual empirical self as the knower and the object it knows are the false projection (*vikṣepa*) of Māyā or false superimpositions (*adhyāsa* or *adhyāropa*) on it which is pure consciousness. The method of the ‘superimposition and subsequent denial’ via the negative process of *not this, not this* and the means of the *anvayavyatireki* logic uncovers the *self-revealed nature* (*svaprakāśatva*) of the *witness consciousness* (*sākṣī-Caitanya*). Though their epistemic relation is a perversion and, despite the fact that, on the plane of empirical logic, the mutual contradiction or mutual otherness between knower and known objects always remains unsolved, nevertheless, it is indirectly affirmed as the single *thread like self* (*sutrātman*) as the non-differentiated *witness consciousness* running through both *the presence and absence* of objects in the *waking experience, dream experience* and also as the pure witness to the absence of both subject and object in the *deep sleep*. Unless one assumes *like thing knows like* as per *the law of conformity* of the ancient Greek philosopher like Empedocles and others or some compatible relation between knower and object known, human knowledge cannot be explained. While denying this requirement in empirical knowledge due to the dualistic

contrast between subject and object, Advaita affirms only their underlying but, non-intentional and *apriori* Transcendental Phenomenological condition, which is the intuitively grasped pure consciousness established as a “common witness” to every acts of *affirmation* and *negations* of empirical knowledge. It is the invariably present as the a-priori, common and the *unconditioned condition* or the *ever present witness consciousness* of all forms of empirical knowledge. Professor R. Balasubramanian, in his Introduction of *THE NAIṢKARMYSIDDHI OF SUREŚVARA*, after referring to Sureśvara’s distinguishing of self and not-self in the second chapter of his book, Brahman-Ātman is mentioned as the *Eternal Witness* (Sadāvilupta-Sākṣi), the attribute-less, infinite (bhūmā), changeless (kūṭastha) and partless (niṣkala) trans-empirical absolute (nāmādibhyaḥparaḥ, xxvi). While this fact about Advaita is a well known standard view, what still remains to be solved is, as to how, the *bare background pure consciousness* which Dr. S. Radhakrishnan refers to the *unconditioned condition* of the complex and variegated world discoverable only through the method of the synthesis of subjective approach and objective approach of the Upaniṣads as well as its negative method of *not this not this* is beyond doubt? Since, Brahman-Ātman as a transcendental reality, and as such it is neither a subject nor an object, the question of its evidence as an objective truth is self-inconsistent. All the above theoretical issues were subsumed under Vidyāranya’s tireless efforts to rationally discuss (yukti) at length about solving this difficult philosophical issue in the five chapters of his fifteen chapters book- *Pañcadaśī* with the analogical reasoning of the examples of the *Citrādīpa-The Lamp of Picture* (126-233), *Trptidīpa- The Lamp of Perfect Satisfaction* (234-244), *Kūṭasthadīpa- The Lamp of Immutable* (345-376), *Dhyānadīpa-The Lamp of Meditation* (377-425) and *Nāṭakadīpa – The Lamp of Theatre* (426-433) (Pañcadaśī of SRI VIDYARANYA SWAMI, 1980). In short as an *a-priori-condition* of the entire gamut of human experience and the diverse physical universe, no positive use of logical reasoning, except the *via negativa* reasoning, can describe it, because such a logical description or explanation presupposes it. Using the Husserl’s presuppositionless method of transcendental phenomenological deduction, Prof R. Balasubramanian states at length that, *Advaita Vedānta may be characterized as “transcendental phenomenology” and “metaphysics of experience”* (Introduction, xiv-xxv). As basis of this view, Dr. Radhakrishnan cites Śaṅkara-

The Self is a non-object, aviśaya, of empirical knowledge, but it is the object of the notion ‘I’ and of immediate realisation.¹ It is of the nature of light which is self-luminous... (Thus) The Self is immediately perceived (not literally but, as an intuitively self-revealed a priori condition of *what reveals* everything). If it were not manifested, nothing else can be manifested. The whole world would cease to be manifested and become blind.³ (232).

It can be discussed in juxtaposition to Heidegger’s non-propositional *logos* as the process of ‘letting the *self-manifest* from *itself in itself* be seen by the *seeing* of the *non-subjector non-I* or *mind* Dasein which finds some elements of similarity to Śaṅkara’s *bhāti –self-manifest* or *self-showing* character of empirical objects which finds in a state of epistemic conformity with or a meeting point in the form of contact with the self-illuminated light of the pure consciousness reflected as intelligence in the mind as the *internal organ* (āntaḥkaraṇa) and the animated senses. To this extent, as far as the psycho-physical instrumentality of the functioning of empirical knowledge - *vṛtti-jñāna* is concerned, the above epistemic situation of Advaita involves the relative positions of idealism and realism. Śaṅkara in his refutation of the *subjective idealism* of the Vijñānavādins by establishing the empirical reality of the external world in his Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya, 2.II.28-29, as far as his acceptance of the existence of the external world is concerned from the empirical perspective (Vyavahārikadr̥ṣṭi), neither absolute idealism nor idealism can be attributed to his view of

the empirical world. Otherwise, as a violation of the *law of conformity* between language, meaning and reality (GRAESER, A. 1977) and *like know like* (Kametkar, R. 2009) & (Ewing, A. C. 1925), knowing subject as what the object is not on the one hand and object known as what the subject is not as the other, in no way, no one would have found oneself a *n epistemic state* of the knowledge of any object.

This paper also deals with some of the essential contemporary philosophical issues only as proposals for future dialogue on the contentious philosophical problems associated with the possibility of the nameless, formless, (nāma-rūparahitaparamatattva), distinctionless and attributeless Brahman-Ātman. Though It is beyond senses, mind and language, and thus, It is indefinable by conventional logic and, any conceivable formal and technical language, as something to start with, and as a necessary evil for the sake of communication on the empirical place, It is still provisionally defined in the Upaniṣads using the *defining statements* (an expression frequently used by Prof. R. Balasubramanian in his classes) like as *satyam- jñānam-anantam- Truth-Knowledge-Infinite* and *kevala sat-cit-ānanda- pure existence-consciousness-bliss* etc. The ancient saintly thinkers of the Upaniṣads did always propose them as a hypothesis to be confirmed by critical dialogues (saṁvāda) and “direct and immediate experience” (aparokṣānubhūti). Perhaps, Bradley, in similar fashion came to speak about “pre-conceptual immediate experience” (Candlish, S. & Basile, P. Spring 2021 Edition) of his holistic Absolute as a Unity. This is a provisional definition which is only to start with as a *via negati* logical method of showing the world of diversity, difference and relationality lacks inherent logical coherence which led Śaṅkara to anticipate Bradley by concluding such a phenomenal reality is an illusory appearance of the non-dual absolute Brahman, It was established as suggestive of logically inexplicable without their underlying bare ground of *pure-existence-consciousness-bliss* (kevala sat-cit-ānanda). This may be interpreted as having an affinity with Bradley’s absolute reality as the unity in diversity. That is, the unutterable *self-illuminated* (svaprakāśa) *pure consciousness* (cinmātra) underlies as the uninvolved “pure witness consciousness” of both absence and presence of the objects of the *waking experience, dream experience and deep sleep - the three states of experience* (avasthātraya). The last or the third state of experience is used as the indication of revelation by its *witness consciousness* which as the indwelling thread like pure self acts as the pure awareness of both the presence and absence of known and known relationship in the said the three states of experience. The word *silence* refers to this indescribable and unutterable pure consciousness as the bare ground which makes all the empirical experiences possible. Thus It itself, therefore being neither a subject nor an object is not amenable to any objective explanation. This is suggestive of the idealist sense of the *inexplicable, non-intentional* and *transcendental phenomenological state* of the *background source* of illuminating every intentional human experience. The Upaniṣads described as “that from which along with mind speech is said to have returned unattained” – Yato vā conivartante/ Aprāpya manasāsaha (Taittirīyopaniṣad, Brahmanandavallī, 2.9.1). This may be elaborated with the help of the concept of *silence* not in the sense of what is dogmatic and a total un reality just as it has been generally believed.

4 *Is Silence absolute nothingness* of what mind, language and logic cannot positively describe?

There are different technical words in saṅskrit which convey the Upaniṣadic concept of *silence* of mind (mauna) and language as the inability to directly express the *indescribable* or *incommunicable* by the *positive* or *descriptive* use of language and logic (anirvacanam, abhāṣaṇam and avyāhṛtam). That is, not only the Upaniṣads had anticipated Wittgenstein, but also that, the *negative logical reasoning* of Śaṅkara to *negatively express* the literally *inexpressible* as the

ultimate state of silence did not tantamount to violating the injunction of the former. Even Wittgenstein's silence has been misinterpreted by many modern philosophers who overlook the fact that, as different from the context in which he asks philosophers to remain silent, using of language in a specific way just as it was carried out by Śaṅkara was not implied by him (Wisan, R. N. 1956). This basic philosophical issue of *silence* which *netneti* – *not this not this* of the Upaniṣads is about was what Śaṅkara attempted to convey by his negative logical reasoning. He did not agree with any positive and literal descriptive use of language as capable of describing or proving it logically as an objective fact, yet it does not mean that it is an absolute nothing (*atyantāsat*). For the idealist like him absolute non-existence of the *first person* subjective awareness which David Chalmers' *hard problem* of consciousness (Chalmers, D.J. 1996) deals with is a sheer impossibility. As long as the human world exists, especially those hard boiled scientists and positivists who propound mind-independent scientific objective truth as their theory of scientific realism can never escape from his or her own internal and *first person* phenomenon of self-reflexive mind. Therefore, it is necessary that, a critical and comparative re-study of similar such theoretical issues related to the problem of *silence* in other traditions which the Upaniṣads' also mentioned (Wikipedia contributors. 2024, March 31). Śaṅkara's interpretation of his Absolute as indescribable because it is devoid of all the empirical attributes (*nirguṇa*), difference and relationality. Thus, the word *silence* in the sense in which he meant is quite understandable in terms of the ways in which his thesis of non-dual nature of his Absolute Being was interpreted by him by proving it as the *grounding structure* of all the types of human experience which as *what reveals*, those revealed cannot go back to it and explain it as an objective fact. This explains the nature of his idea of *silence*.

Despite the fact that, the Buddha's famous *silence* (Organ, T. W. 1954) & (Wang, Y. 2001), Nāgārjuna's *Sūnyatā* (Garfield, J. L., & Priest, G. 2003), *Wittgenstein and Nāgārjuna's Paradox* (Anderson, T. 1985) and Wittgenstein's positivist use of the conception of *silence* (CHURCHILL, J. 1989) & (LI, H., & HAN, D. 2007) are based on different fundamental philosophical contentions, the commonality of this word among these philosophers seems to provide us a new understanding of the way how the indescribable absolute, negatively suggested as the non-dual pure existence-consciousness-bliss of Advaita is to be understood. The word *Silence* is mostly taken as the evidence of what the atheists and materialists mean. But the metaphysics of Advaita rightly called as the *Metaphysics of Experience*, not only by dint of its idealist intent, just as it was already stated, it is a sheer impossibility that, even those scientists who deny the existence of mind or consciousness as a reality could do so without their internal self-awareness awareness of himself or herself as one who thinks, interprets, sees gaps among their hard data which other fellow scientists failed to see and fills up explanatory gaps among them. Thus, it is what Śaṅkara argued as not *non-existent* or *what is not an absolute nothing* (*nātyantāsat*). As the self-manifest *pure awareness*, it also acts as the source of meanings of everything in the world. For the scientists or positivists among philosophers who follow the views of scientists' sense of *silence* means the metaphysical dogma like mind or consciousness is not something objectively real as they see it as their arguments against the traditional philosophers' theory of consciousness as ontologically real because their scientific method cannot grasp it. But for the ancient idealist philosophers *silence* only meant that, while it is vividly real, it is also as what is unspeakable and un-demonstrable or as something which without it their calculations cannot do their business because it is what their complex and difficult computational activities are made possible or always presuppose. This was what Śaṅkara meant.

Nāgārjuna's Pāramārthika Satyam of the state of nirvāna which his *catuṣkoti* reveals as the negatively arrived at state of meditative spiritual consciousness of discrete mental states

(*vṛtti jñāna*) in their causally interrelated perpetual movements is also a realm of silence in the sense that, it is freed from all the logico-epistemic speculations as the definiteness of this or that reality as epistemic claims of static objective facts. In a constantly changing world of dependent origination or conditional existence of things no abiding knowledge is possible. Realising this fact and leading a contemplative life detachment from the false notion of self as an eternal entity which necessarily sees in dualistic terms that, the world as that of objects to be known, possess and exploit is what is called *nirvāna*. Perhaps, Paris Masiel's thesis-*Speaking Silently: Nagarjuna and the Paradox of Ultimate Reality* (Masiel, P. 2022) deals the above fact. This can only be critically examined with reference to Nāgārjuna's *Sūnyatā* (Emptiness) which is about the meditative state of the *stillness* of the ineffable state of *nirvāna* as the *freedom from* the dogmas of the claims and counter claims of definite views of reality. The expression- *freedom from* any definite metaphysical assertion also negates belief (*mithyā-jñāna*) in the *eternal* and *substantial* or *essential self* (*nisvabhāva* and *nairātmya*). But the scientists do just its opposite when they deny the internal self or consciousness while leaving their scientific objective truth of the external world *un-owned* or *unbinged* to their own subjective source which reconstructs them. It means that, their objective truths are self-created by the scientific truths themselves as extra-mental empirical facts. Though it is still a controversial philosophical issue, this much is true that, what is negatively affirmed by Nāgārjuna's *Sūnyatā* is not the eternal and infinite absolute Brahman of Advaita but to remain silent about any definite view of reality including objective truth.

Hence, in the light of the aforesaid, it is necessary to limit the depth and scope of the present deliberation to the way how the traditional concept of *silence* in the Upaniṣads later on articulated as a well developed philosophical articulation in Advaita's extra-logical and linguistic absolute and Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika* philosophy with its central theme of *Sūnyatā* to mean emptiness of all definite view of reality or objective truth about anything. It will be quite safe to say that, despite their differences in what each of them believe to be the nature of the spiritual end of their respective philosophical traditions, both the schools had given only a *negative explanation* of the world as logically incomprehensible. *Silence* only means their avoidance of the positive use of logical reasoning to argue or say anything about any definite view of reality, not because the world does not exist, but because whatever one says about its underlying truth that the level of empirical experience, it will always fall short of the said spiritual truth. No doubt their respective conclusions are different from one another. What it implies is that, the human sense experience is not sufficient and exhaustive enough to comprehend the real truth about the world that this paper deals with. It is in this respect that, there has been increasing interdisciplinary deliberations amongst the experts cutting across disciplines of respectable universities and research institutes of the contemporary world about the increasing convergence between some fundamental issues of science and philosophical theories of *idealism*, *realism* and *consciousness* etc. due to the emerging possibility of observation as consciousness in quantum physics (Reimer Bjorkskov, K.B. Dec 19, 2024). In short, *Silence* in the context of Advaita only means about the fact that, the *self-illuminated pure consciousness* as the *non-intentional transcendental phenomenological structure* which remains in the background as *what reveals* is presupposed by the functioning of all the *intentional acts* of human sense experience, workings of mind of which logical thinking is one and the linguistic meanings of their objects as what is presupposed by them. Thus, these empirical operations such as measurement or calculations or computational activities etc. cannot grasp it as their object because, they are made possible by it. This is where Advaita's pure consciousness will differ from that of Husserl. And it is also what Sir Roger Penrose means when he says human

understanding or consciousness is not computational. In some way or the other, the concept of silence is analysed here in this specific sense.

Though, not literally discursive, the *self-destructive* and unconventional use of the *negative logical reasoning* of Advaita was developed as a characteristic philosophical method only to drive the point at home that, as the *self-illuminated* background reality, *witness consciousness*, it acts as *what reveals* or as the *common pure witness consciousness* to both all affirmations and negations, those things which it reveals cannot go back and know it. This is the meaning of Upaniṣads' conception of *silence* to refer to the indescribability of nirguṇa Brahman-Ātman as an *a-priori transcendental phenomenological structure* of the *pure witness consciousness*.

What the modern scientists have missed is that, somehow by design or as an inadvertent act, they have refused to self-introspect and understand that, without their minds as the *background subjective reality* of their critical scientific activities, they could not have stumbled upon their new discoveries and ability to have creative jumps in their respective fields of science. The scientists cannot work without the inner reality of their minds as the source of their creative insights and ability to see gaps amongst mind boggling assemblage of data. Therefore, they cannot escape nor can their scientific thinking etc. as rooted in it go back to it and, know it as an objective fact of science. Since this is *why* and *how* the existentially insightful and absolute *regressive awareness* of this *background reality* was explained as what remains as the substratum of what are negated by their spiritual posture of *silence* (mounam in the "mounavratam") associated with their spiritual contemplative moods by the ancient philosophers of the Upaniṣads. They had rightly employed the word to augment their negations of all the positive or literal use of language and logic to intuitively affirm the non-intentional and a priori transcendental structure of pure consciousness by the *negative grounding tactics* of *regressive analysis* (adapted from Heidegger's Being and Time). Therefore, it is too haste to put all the eggs in the basket of what and how the *anthropocentric* modern positivist philosophers and their mentor scientists who reject the above ineffable reality without knowing that, their *intentional acts* (Husserl) of rejections as a subjective self-conscious act which interprets their scientific facts only prove what they reject. In doing this they are in a state of an utter oblivion of the fact that, what they believe and think as discoverable as the only objective truth of its kind, and to go on arguing that, there is no other truth or reality underlying the universe beyond what their empirical scientific method discovers is a mere belief in their subjectivity. While they have put all the questions and their empirically discoverable answers to the question-what constitutes truth or reality as their exclusive domain? they are still unaware that, they have been doing this from the vantage position of their subjectivity. It means, though, the positivist philosophers and scientists reject Descartes' *Thinking Substance*, they are still caught within the Cartesian metaphysical duality between their alternative theory of epiphenomenal physical consciousness and the objective truth which they claim to know. They haven't emerged out of their anthropocentric cocoon of subjectivity which their idea of *mind* as *epiphenomenon* or *emergent property* which renders the physical world into an oppositional totality of physical objects. The notion of subjectivity had a long history since the beginning of human civilisation without which its manmade achievements, knowledge and values etc would not have had any sense of meaning and directions. Otherwise, who undertakes *thought experiments* in the field of science? Is this act as a *hypothetical reasoning* which Indian Logic calls *tarka* subjective or objective? As per Husserl's phenomenology, they always presuppose an *irreducible* or *given transcendental phenomenological structure of contextual intentional acts of consciousness* as the condition of the said *thought experiments*. The air tight debates between idealists and realists will be self-defeating, because, being *given* with the power of creative imagination, rational thinking, the human beings are defined as *psychic being*. No

intellectual debates are conceivable without the underlying states of minds of debaters. Husserl explains this as the two way process of intentional acts of inter-subjectivity through which the debaters have mutual understandings. The positivist claim of knowledge as extra-mental descriptive objective truth despite its being reviewed by likeminded positivists is still an act of the inter-subjectivity of logical reasoning. To deny this is to indulge in the act of macro scale unethical practice of totalitarian autocracy of knowledge and to adopt the holier than thou attitude.

To accept that the physical brain as a natural and spontaneous automata knows about itself as physical and thus it is not ontologically real mind is to self-contradict oneself. How a machine would know itself as a machine as its own *self-awareness* and refuse to admit that it essentially is an innate mind or a human intelligence which is different from *machine intelligence*? That is how would something can be essentially a *material knower* who is aware of what is empirically *true* or *false* and makes complicated scientific judgments?

The thrust of the above points is that, without a *self-illuminated impersonal common ground*, it will not be possible to have a *creative synoptic* understanding of *missing explanatory gap* between two or more *empirical facts*, analyse, examine, evaluate them, and the ability to have a comprehensive and *de novo* interpretation of and draw conclusion from those varieties of accumulated data in hand which have been slipping through the fingers of the majority scientists. Samantha Copeland, in his (her) paper-*On serendipity in science: discovery at the intersection of chance and wisdom* circumvents and avoids the controversial issues between intuition and counter-intuition by interpreting the role of *serendipity* vis-à-vis the concepts of *chance* and *wisdom* (Copeland, S. 2019). As that of an absolute idealist (psychological), though it is not some idealist dogma, but highly *formal* and an *a-priori pure epistemological principle* Kant's *synthetic unity of apperception*, though a mere *logical postulate* links it to his *I think* and called it as *transcendental deduction* (Gentry, G.2022), At least on the conceptual plane, similar such a view seems to underlie Śaṅkara's discussions of empirical knowledge. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in *An Idealist View of Life* (Radhakrishnan, S. 1979) is quite engrossing, persistent and emphatic when he critically writes with a reflective rigour about the fact that, new ground breaking discoveries in science and mathematics etc are not the works of faltering, halting, plodding and static, abstract and discursive processes of logical reasoning on the work tables of mathematicians and scientists. But those epochal, sudden and quantum jump in the process of new scientific discoveries come *unmasked* or as something suddenly appearing with a new and fresh light which were not consciously sought after. Such path breaking moments usually occur when the minds of the scientists are quite, unperturbed, calm, serene and in a state of solitude, as if their new insights which connects previously incorrigible facts and automatically places them into their rightful framework have come out of the blue. He cites Henry Bergson's *intellectual sympathy* that may be considered as having affinity with *rational intuition*. It is one of the *three intuitions*, the other two being volitional *intuition* and *emotional intuition* in *hunch*, *premonition* and *gut feeling* etc. It is referred to as a different way of viewing intuition in a scientific way like *serendipity* (Levada, C.L. Maceti, H., et al. Dec 2015) without directly making Bergson to find company with the traditional view of intuition. How can anyone ever explain new discoveries in science as the work of some *self-unconscious factors* in the complex nano level intricate neural networking of the human brain? Gerald Holton in his paper-*On Trying to Understand Scientific Genius* written with reference to the history of science, and cites Albert Einstein's own perplexity in understanding of his own and the way in which other genial scientists minds work - *He (Einstein) wrote in an essay in 1918, ... that the small group of genial scientists who have found special favor with the Angel of the Lord "are mostly rather odd, uncommunicative, solitary fellows who, despite these common characteristics, resemble one another really less than the host of*

the banished"(HOLTON, G. 1971, 95). Joe L. Kincheloe, Shirley R. Steinberg and Deborah J. Tippins in their joint paper 'Chapter Six: Einstein's Unique Thinking Style' writes about the nature of the uniqueness of Einstein's unconventional thinking patterns—*Albert Einstein's thinking style was unique. He followed his own inclinations and blazed a new cognitive path for those interested in genius and in education. As with other great scientists, Einstein was fascinated by the way people think, the way discoveries are made, and the source of creativity. He passionately wanted to understand his own thinking patterns and the nature of scientific imagination in general. He often tried to explain his unique thinking style, concluding that it was "rather vague" and nonlogical (Hoffman, 1972) and (Kincheloe, J. L., Steinberg, S. R., & Tippins, D. J. 1999, 118).* Therefore, the concepts of *serendipity* and *counter-intuition* etc often used by many scientists (some of whom are openly against philosophy and religion) and positivist analytical philosophers need to undertake an unpacking of the hidden skeletons in their cupboards. That is, somehow *intuition* cannot be delinked from the critical investigations on the *ontology of consciousness* or *mind* which has come to figure in the historically unprecedented scientific discoveries by creative genius among the scientists should be left as inconclusive (Levada, C.L. Maceti, H., et al. Dec 2015). There are strong rooms for treating them as being driven generally by extra-logical factors beyond the issues under discussion.

In the language of Advaita it is the case of the *cinmātranirguṇa* Brahman-Ātman as an absolute *bare ground* (*adhishthānamātra*) automatically serving as non-intentional or transcendental phenomenological reality as the *unconditioned condition* of all the *intentional acts* of Husserl in the empirical plane. Without the *background bare consciousness* (*citrūpīadhishthānamātra*) as *what reveals*, it is difficult to understand as to how one can undertake analysis, examination, evaluations and reinterpretations as aspects of critical thinking of theoretical overhaul, explanations and, filled up wide gaps among data and provide it as new reasonable theory which corrects issues of empirical knowledge riddled with a lot of uncritical theoretical lapses and wide *gaps* among seemingly or actually unexplained *gaps*. Even the post-intuition, detail, elaborate, well organised and systematic efforts of logical activities, including rigorous logical ratiocination to substantiate or refute the intuited truth or even to analyse, examine, evaluate, to interpret and draw conclusions from them and introduce it to the public as a cogent body of knowledge are inconceivable tasks without an *externally unconditioned source of the light of awareness* to illumine them. Pure consciousness as *what reveals* is not the same with the first term of the *revealer and revealed relation* of Dvaita Vedānta. These nuances of understanding is based on the discussions by this second author's late teacher Professor T.P. Ramachandran, the author of *Dvaita Vedānta* (1976) cited elsewhere in this paper.

6 Few words on Pure Consciousness, Intuition and Counter-intuition in Science

Due to the popular fear of losing scientific credibility, the majority top ranking modern scientists frequently mocks and undermines the concept of *intuition* or *intuitive flash* of new ideas in religious or spiritual philosophy that is used as the evidence of the underlying spiritual unity of the cosmos. Instead, time and again they would use the expression *counterintuitive* or employ *serendipity* as an *emergent property* which avoids any spiritual source of the creative jumps of knowledge in the human mind through a regressive examination of them to substantiate the objective authenticity of their theories. It means the traditional notion of *intuition* even that of Kant's technical use of it has been rubbished as a pure dogma. This underlying *bare light* is not the first term of the *revealer and revealed relation* of conventional psychology of knowledge, it is only as what *self-reveals* or *illumines*. The extraordinary minds of genius with highly sensitive and fertile minds of creative imaginations coupled with hearts attuned to feel and intuit into the inner workings of the

natural world offer the ordinary humanity a beacon light to emerge out of the dark and confused and direction-less life of their humdrum existence. It is this truth that, all the schools of Vedānta and, especially the philosophy of Advaita stands out in the crowd in reckoning mankind that, the saving grace of their lives consists in realising their ever attained essential (nityasiddha) spiritual rootedness in the non-dual absolute.

7 Advaita's Non-Intentional Transcendental Phenomenology

The Ground of All the Husserlian Intentional Acts of Consciousness

In the ultimate analysis, since the empirical world as an *illusory appearance* is a mixed bag, and as such, all the empirical knowledge as the works on the plane of *super-impositions* (adhyāsa/ahdyāropa) on the absolute reality, they always stand in the possibility of endless *sublations*(bādhitva) by higher and higher truths. This acts in the form of propositional judgments wherein the predicate term is denied or affirmed of in the subject term. It shows that, the predicate term may never reveal or describe or is never relatable to the subject term as to *what it is*. Perhaps, Kant's *noumena* in relation to phenomenal sense experience would only hints at this fact about the unknowability of the real truth about the things etc of the empirical world given by sense experience is built on the shifting sands of the phenomenal world. It seems that, while agreeing with the nature of knowledge of the world of sense experience, he did see its limitations for which he brought in his *noumena* as the *unknown and unknowable*, yet he still maintained that it makes the world of sensibility intelligible. It may be considered as his absolute idealist position of *transcendental deduction* as the hidden structure of innateness of intelligence underlying all the objective truths. The epistemology of Advaita implies that, since in the language of Karl Popper, every case of empirical knowledge is falsifiable, what is falsified is impossible without the affirmation of an alternative knowledge of a thing (in the form of a set of properties or predicates) which replaces the former which suffers negation. This author had made an attempt to delve into the above issues in his paper-*Contemporary Relevance of Advaita's Theory of Truth* in the book - *On the Nature of Consciousness* in which the *negative logical reasoning* of Śaṅkara is compared to Karl Popper's falsification theory and the *Indirect Proof of Logic* to examine their possible similarity, though not entirely (Khangamcha, P.M., 2018). Eventually all the negations in knowledge always presuppose the ever present, self-established (svattaḥ siddha), self-revealing (svaprakāśa), infinite (anañtam), eternal (nītya) and unsublatable (abādhitatva) *bare background consciousness* (adhithānamātra). This is the position of absolute idealism which only *aparokṣānubhūti*— *immediate experience* alone can experience as *what illumines* both *falsity* and *truth* of logic. What the ancient Upaniṣadic saintly philosophers, and following them Śaṅkara did were only to argue rationally in an elaborate manner that, the inescapable pure awareness is a common witness of both absence and the presence of knowledge.

Advaita's theory of consciousness is in agreement with Sir Roger Penrose' theory, because consciousness for him is also computationally irreducible. In the language of the Upaniṣads, since *pure consciousness* as *what reveals* underlies all the highest mathematical operations, those mathematical processes cannot go back to it and provide a computational description of consciousness as *what reveals* them. Therefore, his settled view is that, consciousness is not *algorithmic* in nature which gives serious blows to the reductive physical theorists of consciousness. Penrose's first glimpse of the innateness of consciousness was when he had confronted Kurt GÖel's "...*Incompleteness Theorem* which shows 'how every logical system generates statements that are true but that cannot be proven within that system' "(Nilakandan, A. Dec 29, 2024). Both Penrose and Stuart Hameroff have been working together for their collaborative scientific research on the theory of '*orchestrated objective reduction of consciousnesses*' in the field of quantum-biology and neuroscience involving microtubules. This author has listened to many of the online interviews of and talks by Sir

Roger Penrose and Stuart Hameroff and others which kindle new hope in the increasing interest and revival of the traditional philosophical problems of consciousness. In this respect, the second author's late teacher Professor T.P. Ramachandran in his book *Dvaita Vedānta* discusses the difference in the interpretations of the nature of the *revelation* of knowledge by itself in Advaita on the one hand and Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita on the other. 'According to Advaita Brahman in its essential character SvarūpaLakṣaṇa is of the nature of *pure knowledge as what reveals* cannot itself be spoken of as the *revealed objects* or even as the *revealer*. Therefore, in the self-revelation of knowledge (svataḥpramāṇyavāda of validity), the terms *revealer* and *revealed* has no meaning' (Ramachandran, T.P. 1976, 19). The latter two schools held the opposite views. The Advaitins seem to make a subtle distinction between *what reveals*— as a non-relational and distinctionless term, and *revealer*— as a relational term. Though, this deliberation is done on the plane of empirical knowledge, it is to emphasise the underpinning meaning of pure consciousness as what is presupposed by all *intentional acts* of ordinary phenomenal experience, as their *non-intentional transcendental phenomenology of consciousness* where *revealer* and *revealed* do not operate.

9 Logical Positivists and Scientists

Caught in the Parable of the Tenth Man

On a hypothetical plane, it has been a mystery of the minds of the scientists as a sign of serious psychopathological condition that, while studying the macro galaxies and exploring the micro level quantum reality, they are unaware of or unconcerned about their very minds observing them. In philosophical terminology, the question *who are they or who am I - Ko'ham* never occurs in their *un-self-reflexive* mind-brain? Is it not like the plight of *the tenth* well-known Vedāntic parable (Atri, D. May 5, 2024)? As the blind believers of the empirical method of the former, and the rejectionists of metaphysics, the modern and positivist analytical philosophers, talk about their own minds as the Ghost in the Machine. I would rather call them *Zombies*, who while they are unaware of their own essential selfhood are predatory to their human surroundings. In utter oblivion of their own underlying *subjective phenomena* as *I(s)* who make them the kind of creative genius among the top ranking mathematicians and scientists etc who observe what they observe and interpret them before making difficult scientific judgments, they would fight shy in talking about crucial questions about their own *internal phenomena*. Kant's *I think* behind his *Synthetic Unity of Apperception*) is the framer of hypothesis, the one which reflects on its internal objects, critical thinker, organiser, imaginer, analiser, interpreter, drawer of conclusions, discoverer and filler of gaps between previously unexplained facts.

The AI experts and neuroscientists have even come to the idea that, to be consistent with their rejection of the Cartesian *Thinking Substance*, they are also beginning to reject, free will and making choices etc as illusions. Yet, it is quite ridiculous and it does not even come nearer to common sense to argue that, the mechanical, spontaneous and natural automata of the physical human brain can think mathematically and discover $E=MC^2$. Is it not paradoxical to deny the reality of the very activities of the human mind with its inherent passion for knowledge, sense of wonder and curiosity which had acted as the very *inner source* of shaping the history of philosophy and science? Without a mind as the witness of the incessant human inquisitive passion, sense of wonder and the unstoppable urge to know, is it the physical reality in the form of the human brain behind the incessant quests for discovering the possible underlying truth of the vast and unfathomable multifarious universe? This problem is discussed by the author in his paper *-Physical Brain's Self-Awareness of Itself as Physical* (Khangamcha, P.M. (2024)). This self-awareness of the physical nature via its equally physical nature of human creature's brain is nothing short of matter's knowing itself as a physical reality and, it is not the so called traditional notion of essential

consciousness or mind. The modern scientists cannot deny that, they spend their entire lives of the passionate desires to and irresistible quests for unlocking the mystery of the fundamental truth about the world which is not available as an obvious truth on the plane of ordinary experience. The centuries on relentless endeavours to discover the lurking metaphysical truth of philosophers, the pathetic and incorrigible faith in a contextless spiritual truth of religious mystics and great historic religious saints, sages and prophets, and the lookout for unearthing the fundamental natural truth of the scientists who believe that, their empirical method alone can deliver the real answer to the question about the origin of the world etc. certainly tell us about the philosophical significance of the restless human mind. Without the human mind, the history of human civilisations would not have been possible.

The above is the contentious issue of the hear splitting debates between A.J. Ayer and P.F. Strawson in which the former argues in favour of physicalism and the later speaks about the idea of person as a *logically primitive concept* is constituted by both the mutually irreducible *mental characteristics* and *bodily characteristics* (Hamlyn, D.W. 1984, Ch 9, 193-200). It is this fundamental question which this author has raised in his already cited paper entitled *Physical Brain's Self-Awareness of Itself as Physical: A Zombie Who Knows that It is Not the real Ego or the I* (Khangamcha, P.M. 2024, 229-284). Will all the achievements of modern scientific knowledge that have been driven by the corrosive urge to know the real truth behind the natural world as the lifelong passionate pursuits of the gifted scientists be done by the human mind as an *emergent property* or an *epiphenomenal property* which has no reality beyond its physical correlate called the human brain? How will knowledge be possible without an introspective and outward looking center of an inner light called self or an 'I' who as the knower also knows that he or she is in the act of knowing? The contemplative act of the *state of knownness* or the *state of awareness* as a *self-reflexive understanding* as ontologically real epistemic state and self-criticism of one's own ideas, concepts and theories as introspective exercise requires a knowing center who anticipates, analyses, undertakes examinations and evaluations and organise them into a satisfactory conclusion before making them public? Even a most advanced *state of the art* AI as the man-made or extension of human intelligence and till it ceases to be artificial, it cannot be considered as the evidence of the sameness of machine intelligence and human intelligence. John Searle undertakes a detail analysis of these issues in *Minds, Brains and Programs* (Searle, J.R., 1980). In another words, as per Sir Roger Penrose's quantum biological thesis, human intelligence or consciousness is irreducible to computational process just like the machine intelligence. This is because, just as the epistemology of Advaita is established on the basis of the *background pure consciousness* as the *unconditioned condition* of both affirmative and negative propositions, as the intelligence which makes even the highest processes of computation possible, the human consciousness which undertakes complex and higher mathematical calculations is interpreted is to be non-computational. It is also suggested by the upaniṣadic statement that, Brahman-Ātman as the *witness consciousness* is neither the *known* just like the *ordinary objects* are *known* nor is it the *unknown* as the *absolute nothingness* (atyantāsat). The same meaning is conveyed by the statement of one of the Upaniṣads- '*Him the eyes do not see, nor the tongue expresses, nor the mind grasps*' (Choudhary, K. August 17, 2017). That is, as their underlying basis, neither the eyes, nor the tongue nor the mind can go back and know it as an object. Whether or not, there can be pure consciousness totally devoid of the epistemic relation of a knowing subject and its object known is an altogether a different issue. That is, as far as the experiential condition of human world is concerned, the ontological reality of the acts of human consciousness as that of human beings as the *caityapurusa* – *psychic being* and, accordingly, it is the source of all the ideas, values, meanings and aims of life and society

in relation to the physical world which have been reflected in the history of human civilisation is an inevitable fact. Without the human mind taken as a reality to be the driving force, the entire disciplines of knowledge including that of science and technological research, discoveries and inventions etc would not have become possible. The history of human civilisation itself is the product of the mirroring of pure consciousness on the *internal organ* of *inner sense* called the human mind as the vehicle of discursive logical articulations, thinking, imagining and doing every creative cognitive act including the intuitive grasp of new ideas and truths. The human creativity is the temporal manifestations in the highly fertile and sensitive minds of the infinite, eternal and inexhaustible but in a coming closer to the *mysterium tremendum* of the Supreme Being of Christian mysticism of Rudolf Otto. As the “wholly other”, God of the Christian mystics is the merciful Saving Grace of the ignorant born sinners loitering around directionless in the world (Otto, R. 1924). The Brahmasūtra text 2.1.33- *lokavattulākaivalyam confirms* that, the variegated universe of mind boggling diversity is as if the spontaneous play of the absolute as Its self-determined and spontaneous blissful act of manifesting its fullness which agrees with the statement of the Cāṅdogya Upaniṣad- *tadaiṣa tababusyām prajāyeyeti* (6.2.3). Advaitins do not take the above views literally, but while reiterating the Unity in Diversity, after stating thus, their direct meaning will be shown as untenable and they will be further interpreted as the appearance (theory of causation – *vivartavāda*) of the absolute. To solve this seemingly intractable issue, it is necessary to re-examine the ideas of consciousness of Rene Descartes, Edmund Husserl, John Searle and David Chalmers etc in the modern western philosophy and reposition their philosophical perspectives of idealism in the light of quantum consciousness, the universe as an interconnected living system and *panpsychism*.

11 Scientific Objective Truth Is Still Based on Subject-Object Duality

An Oppositional Wall which has Never Been Crossed

What this paper seeks to propose as an emphasis for further critical inquiry is that, by its very nature, such an *ultimate reality* (paramatattva) of the Upaniṣads, as the sole, infinite (anantam), eternal truth (satyam), distinctionless or undifferentiated (abheda/nirviśeṣa) and undivided (kūṭastha) *bare ground* (adhiṣṭhānamātra) of the variegated world is unapproachable or indescribable by the activities of human intellect, logic, mind and language as they presuppose pure consciousness as *what reveals* them. This simple logic has been ‘somehow’ deliberately or out of sheer ignorance or due to lack of critical self-introspection or inability to have a *self-reflexive observation of one’s state of mind* is still to be appreciated and treated as a viable hypothesis which deserves innovative inquiry. Due to riding on the academic bandwagon of popular but institutionally well established modern reason, concepts, views, ideas and theories, being conformists and herd instinct, gullible and readily believing, the intelligence of modern scholars in general – especially in philosophy have been numbed by the so called *objective truth* of science and its empirical method. They are nowhere to understand that, this epistemic conformism is a consequence of the *metaphysical duality* between their subjectivity and the so called objectivity which is still very much lurking as the foundation of the anthropo-logocentric nature of modern self. They are still unaware that, their scientific temperament and innocuous blind passion for logical validity or scientific objectivity are the tell tale signs of the psychosis of their dualistically fractured minds which are still embroiled in the cocoon of their subjectivity and what they have articulated in this *internal world* in the name of logic or rationality, *logical thought essences* or *logico-epistemic property* are only *added or supplemented* (Macann, Ch. 1993,64) to as the properties of objective truth. Śāṅkara and Heidegger have the common ground of the rejection of the subject and object duality. In a sense, beyond the world of *sensibility*, it is impossible for the discursive, plodding, faltering, defective, limited and discrete human

minds and sense experience mirrored in the subjective mind to know in truth about the physical objects as *things in themselves*. Macann presents this idea by showing the fundamental or paradigmatic difference between the phenomenology of Husserl and that of Heidegger by stating that,

‘In §5 of *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, an early text originally delivered as lectures given at Marburg in the summer of 1927, Heidegger presents his movement back to an understanding of the being of beings as the inverse of that effected by Husserl’s reduction.⁸ In place of the Husserlian procedure which moves from the world of the natural attitude up to a higher, transcendental plane with a view to bringing to light the transcendental structures constitutive of the objectivity of the entities encountered in the natural attitude, we find an alternative procedure which moves from the ontic level down to a deeper, ontological plane with a view to bringing to light the ontological structures constitutive of the being of the entities in question’ (64).

That is, *objectivity* is constituted by mere logico-epistemic thought essences in the dualistically positioned *subjectivity as what objectivity is not*. In another words, speaking in epistemological terms, both *subject* term and *predicatum* term of a proposition are still aspects of logical duality of knower and known, and no amount of *common agreement* among fellow and like minded logicians who while reviewing a research paper can ever make them escape from the four walls of their respective *inter-subjectivity* involved in their act of reviewing and claim that, the so called sharable knowledge is the *representation* or *presentation* of some mentally unanchored external truth. They are also totally oblivious to the fact that, the so called objective truth of them is only a *manufactured conclusion* of their convenient *inter-subjectivity* of like minded fallow experts in a field. The Husserlian expression *inter-subjectivity* means that, the acts of reviewing as internal processes of academic papers or even books by well known scholars or experts known as *blind reviewers* in a modern discipline of knowledge and the truth of objectivity certified by this act does not make it escape its self-enclosed subjective cocoon. It means, whatever is the objective validity that, they certify is still in their shared internal world. In a sense, the *thing in itself* of Kant conveys the idea that, the much talked about objective validity of a research work in any field of modern knowledge systems has not ceased to be pure thought essences. That is, no truth as the *thing in itself* about the doubtful external world has come to be known except their sensible properties.

CONCLUSION

Advaita’s Non-Contradiction Theory of Truth and Negative Reasoning

As the Speaking about the Unspeakable

If the peculiar or out of the world notion of undifferentiated pure consciousness (*nirviśeṣa*) as the non-dual absolute of Advaita Vedānta just as it was so laboriously reconstructed by Śaṅkarais beyond the ordinary human senses, mind and language then, why did he still talk about it or why was it that, he spent his entire life to write his grand superstructure of the thesis of non-dualism? One of the clues for having an indirect understanding of this supreme reality (*paramatattva*) may be undertaken by discerning his dialectical method of negative reasoning derived from the Upaniṣadic *not this, not this (neti neti)* which is seen in his and PūrvaMīmāṃsā’s epistemological theory of truth – *anadbigata abādhitaviśayakatvatat sat*. This theory assumes that, every act of empirical knowledge (*vṛtti jñāna*) is true till it is negated or sublated. In a way as it is somewhat similar to Popper’s *Theory of Falsification* (Shea, B. n.d.), Śaṅkara did assume that, all forms of empirical knowledge are taken as falsifiable and thus, they are true till falsified. Therefore, as far as the empirical knowledge (*vṛtti* or *vyavahārikajñāna*) is concerned, that its validity consists in its *non-contradictedness*

(Datta, D.M. 1960, abādhitatva, 21) does not mean that, it always remains as unfalsifiable. No doubt he also did accept that, as long as the empirical experience goes on, in terms of absolute idealism, the underlying *innate structure* of the *bare consciousness* remains as it *ever present* (*nitya siddha*) the inexplicable presupposition of every case of ordinary knowledge. It is this *unconditioned condition* of or presupposed by even the highest creative scientific and mathematical thinking that, Sir Roger Penrose interprets it as an ultimate epistemic situation which is not amenable to be understood in terms of algorithm or computational grasp. This can be explained on the basis of the distinction between *vṛtti-jñāna*— empirical knowledge (*vyavaharika* or *laukikajñāna*) that ever stands under the endless possibilities of negations by higher and higher knowledge and *svarūpa jñāna* – *essential knowledge* per se as the absolute *bare ground* (*adhiṣṭhānamātra*) of pure consciousness (*cinmātra*) as always presupposed by the former and as such, no ordinary cognition or knowledge can go beyond it. This is the central issue of this paper, and it is deemed that, it still needs a clear cut explanation. That is, how will the Advaitins justify the logically and linguistically inexplicable or indemonstrable absolute sense of *pure awareness* totally bereft of the distinction between *knower* and *known* relation, but an *ultimate condition* of human experience in the world which only a *self-reflexive intuitive grasp* or a retrospective analysis may reveal. Many of such philosophical issues have been summarily rejected by the logical positivists and scientists alike as intuitive dogmas. Yet, since, Penrose’s thesis of *human understanding* or consciousness as *non-computational*, because all the higher order cognitive scientific and creative mathematical thinking, observations, interpretations, analysis and drawing of conclusion including the ability to see the *missing explanatory gaps* among observed empirical facts presuppose it as their *background witness consciousness* or *pure awareness*, all these find their inner source of directions, meaning and, purpose from it. It has the nature of being a mysterious source of internally self-illuminated (*svaprakāśatva*) self-reflexive understanding of all the above higher cognitive activities churning out historically path breaking innovative works of discoveries of new scientific truths.

What is being presupposed as the ultimate basis of everything can never be grasped by all those which stand on it. Speech itself is made possible by it, therefore, it itself is unspeakable. Śaṅkara defined *adhyāśa* or *adhyāropa* as the *māyā* caused superimposition of *knower* and *known* activities on the non-dual pure consciousness. From this arises the senses of being doers or agents of actions (*kartā*), enjoyer (*bhoktā*) and knower (*jñāta*) as the projections (*vikṣepa*) of the false senses *I* and *thou* – *yusmadasmadpratyayorgocarah*, creature feeling (*praityabhāva*) (Brahmasūtram- Śaṅkarabhāṣyopetaṁ, *SamanvayādhyāśaPrathamah*). This is also Māyā’s act of concealment (*āvaraṇa*) of the essential nature of the attributeless absolute (*nirguṇa*) as non-dual and distinctionless (*nirviśeṣadvaitam*); It needs to be re-understood in the light of the above deliberations. The intuitive character of the immediate realisation of the spiritual oneness underlying the variegated world is stated in the *Aparokṣānubhuti* texts 135-137 - *The nature of the cause inheres in the effect; not vice versa, so through reasoning it is found that, in the absence of the effect¹, the cause, as such also disappears // 135// and In this way alone there arises in the pure-minded a state of awareness (of Brahman) which is afterwards merged into Brahman // 137//* (APAROKṢĀNUBHUTI OR SELF-REALIZATION OF SHRI SANKARACHARYA, 1938, 71-73). Professor R.B. frequently speaks and reiterates about this ideas by stating the former as the superimposition (*adhyāśa* or *adhyāropa*) on the later as per Sadānanda’s *adhyāropāpavāda- Superimposition and Subsequent Denial* (trans. By R. Balasubramanian).

The superimposition of *naṁa-rūpabhedā*— “difference as per names and forms” as the nature of empirical experience also explains subject and object duality. Due to their mutually contradictory nature, every act of empirical knowledge is always subject to sublations. That

is, in the ultimate analysis, *vṛtti-jñāna*s all forms or types of worldly knowledge are always *sublatable* (*bādhitva/bādhitā*) as an illusory appearance superimposed on the Nirguna and Nirviśeṣa Brahman. What is necessary to be reckoned with here is that, the conception of *māyā* or *avidyā* is the most misunderstood and despised metaphysical concept which the traditional Advaitins have not been properly responded or defended. Śaṅkara seemed to have had its anticipation when he had squarely rejected the non-acceptance of the existence of the external world by the subjective idealism of Vijñānavādins on the basis of his critical analysis of the relative differences between *dream experiences* and *waking experience* in his *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, *Vaidharmyāccana svapnādivat*, 2, ii, 29. Śaṅkara had anticipated Wittgenstein's 'public frame of reference' (Hamlyn, D.W. 1984, 16) that refutes the western idealists. It was done by his argument against the *subjective idealism* of Vijñānavādins with the application of two terminologies - *lokaprasiddha* and *mahājanasamāgamā* which have the same meaning with the above view of Wittgenstein to establish the publicly established existence of the external world as empirically real or has empirical existence and not some fiction of mind. ŚrīMadhusūdana Sarasvatī in the *Mithyatā* section (Falsity) of his *Advaita Siddhi*, certainly makes a distinction between something's being a case of illusory or appearance due to logical issues of explaining it does not go against its being in existence. That is, the well known statement "*unreal the world is, but non-existent it is not*" conveys its true import. *Of the unreal, there is existence, of the real, there is not non-existence. The finale truth of both of these is known by men of wisdom* (Yogananda, P. 2021, Gītā,11:16).

Till today, many contemporary philosophers, including the best modern Indian philosophers who are mostly antithetical to Advaita for social, cultural and political reasons, and also because of their being initiated in the western philosophical criteria, they deliberately conflate the metaphysical word *existence (sat)* with illusory appearance (*māyā/mithyā*) unreal (*asat or non-existence*) etc., and illicitly conclude that, the word *māyā* means the world as an illusory appearance means, and thus, it does not exist which Śaṅkara never stated. This philosophical problem cannot be solved unless one clarifies a vital theoretical question of the ubiquitous persistence of duality in what they claim as objective knowledge. Cutting across disciplines, in the modern academic world the reality of the mutually different knower and known is not questioned. The modern academics have not taken into consideration of the intractable epistemological crisis of how modern man as the epistemic *knowing subject* of individualism stands in an oppositional relation to the external world of *objects* and the development of objective truth based on it (Bernstein, R.J. 1983, 10). Have they solved the problem of linking *logical relation* as *internal relation* (Perovic, K. Summer 2024 Edition) based on the principles of logico-epistemic thought essences (essentialism) used for explaining the different physical objects of *external relation*? That is, has their objective truth of the doubtful external world put an end to the Cartesian Anxiety? How they solve the objective truth about the doubtful physical world which stands in stark opposition the knowing subject? This question holds ground even with regard to the positivist reductionist and physicalist theory of consciousness who do not accept the ontological reality of mind or consciousness. They cannot deny the epistemic presuppositions of *knower*, acts of *knowing* and *knownness* of what one knows as the work of an *epiphenomenal emergent mind* as the works of theoretical epistemic consciousness. Thus, there may not be any sharp line of demarcation between realism and idealism. What seems to have been overlooked or somehow a crucial epistemological issue concerns the fundamental metaphysical question as to 'how the external world is known' without a real and incorporeal internal phenomenon of knower's knowing? Śaṅkara, pure and simple did place his primary focus on the underlying and intuitively established as well as inescapable "unconditioned condition" (a terminology used by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in

his *An Idealist View of Life*) of all acts of human experiences. What is important is the morally qualitative difference between the way how one looks at the empirical world of diversity before realising their common spiritual ground and the manner in which the realised souls have changed their outlook and attitude towards the world after the spiritual realisation. This is what is reflected in the answers to the question in the Gītā, 2.54 about a spiritually enlightened person leads his or her life etc in terms of his or her social dealings and conducts etc.

In another words, the intuitive grasp of the spiritual truth of the expressions- *bare ground*, *pure existence*, *pure consciousness* and *pure bliss* etc. do not obliterate the experiences of the empirical world, though in qualitative terms their meanings are drastically changed. In Vidyāranya's Pañcadaśī, the un-negatability of the Nirguṇa Brahman as the pure awareness or witness consciousness (śākṣicaitanya) on which the world of nāma-rūpa is superimposed by māyā is explained by his illustrative examples of *Citra Dīpa-The Light of the Canvas* and *Nāṭaka Dīpa- The Light of the Theatre* and three other examples. This text was taught to us by Prof. R.B as a classical text straight away from the original text. In similar fashion, Hegel's dialectic idealism came to do it centuries later, that the continuous movement of human knowledge goes on in and through the processes of thesis and antithesis and synthesis and so on till they rest in or in a way they reveal the absolute spirit as their ultimate *apriori* condition. As a result, Hegel as an absolute idealist had rejected Kant's criterion of *concept* as the *a-priori* condition that does not make *precept* blind. His Absolute Spirit is the ultimate resting ground of ordinary human experience or knowledge etc. When Hegel did this it is accepted as one of the metaphysical presuppositions of the theories of knowledge, but in the case of Śaṅkara's similar works which preceded Hegel, there has been a penchant and summery rejection as dogmatic. This issue seems to be still lying undefended with a rigorous argument on the basis of comparative research between Śaṅkara's theory of knowledge, that of Hegel and similar others. Yet, this paper will leave it as a mere suggestion or proposal as philosophical problems to be tackled later on. Perhaps, the expression non-dualism itself is suffice to argue that, what it seeks to convey is beyond human ability to understand because, human knowledge is relational in nature. As long as they would continue to dwell on or believe in the fact that, the reality is exhausted by whatever the ordinary human knowledge of the surface level world is '*...all that there is*' (Hamlyn, D.W., 1984, 12), then there is no way that, anyone can ever know It with the help of his or her sense experience. It is what Kena Upaniṣad says—It is Known to him to whom it is Unknown; he knows it not to whom it is known. (It is) Unknown to those who know, and Known to those who do not know. (11)'.

What is to be digested herewith is that, just by dumping the ancient, time tested and resilient ancient Indian Vedāntic philosophical thoughts in the theological departments, the philosophical merits of the philosophy of Vedanta is not diminished. All these suggest that, the Vedāntic philosophical articulations were not some dogmatic philosophical assertions. That, the world is illusory appearance does not mean that, it does not exist. The core philosophical teaching of Advaita is not to deny the 'empirical reality' and 'existence' of the 'variegated world', but it only exhorts that, each and every person 'ought to' acknowledge the inescapable truth that, it is situated in the 'One and No-dual Absolute Brahman'.

To conclude, the philosophical problems as contemporary reading of the ineffable non-dual absolute of Advaita discussed under sub-sections are only hypothetical approaches and the authors do not assume that, they are conclusive, and they may not suffer from counter arguments. But, whatever may be the arguments of the critics, they would still fall under Śaṅkara's Adhyāropa-Apavāda- Superimposition and Subsequent Denial based on the Upaniṣadic *Net Netī*, and in that way, the potential critics possible arguments and their

claims in favour of objective truth was anticipated by him as subject to negation due to the theoretically and logically incorrigible nature of the dualistic existential tension between subject/knower and known/object known; and it always affirms such negations' bare ground. sŚaṅkara's contribution to the world of philosophy was his absolute idealist stand of the *bare witness consciousness* intuitively affirmed by the unending possibility of series of negations as *not this not this*.

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