

ADVAITIC CRITIQUE OF EXPERIENCE

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I have confined my observation in the present discussion, to the principal 'Upaniṣads and Śāṅkara Vedānta. The text, for the present observation is an argument about the limitation of experience to describe the witness-self. I observe that it has never been the aim of the text to analyse the concept of Sākṣi in terms of experience but it is quite obvious that, philosophically, the whole text is an analytic device based on experiences to help the mind to reach conceptually the concept of indivisible witness-self. Before coming to the discussion on the issue proper, I think, it is useful to clarify the meaning of the use of the terms 'experience and Sākṣi'. By the term 'experience' we mean knowledge acquired and the epistemic justifications and empirical evidences given for proving its certainty. More specifically by the term 'experience' I particularly, mean empirical knowledge acquired through the knowing process. It needs no mention that a critique of experience as used in the sense of our cognition acquired by senses and reasoning i.e. relative and conditioned knowledge, finds that the very base or cognitive ground in such conceptualisations is ignored or is declared as unknown. The term Sākṣi' is generally used in usual communication in the sense of: impartial or disinterestendness of knowledge, the knowledge acquired indpendently of our mental and cultural allegiances to physioslogical, psychological, axiological and other entities. In acquiring such a knowledge as Sākṣi-Jñāna our consciousness (I-ness) enjoys freedom from allegiances to things and to our private thoughts.¹ Secondly, the term 'Sākṣi' as used in 'Sākṣi-caitanya' (witness-consciousness), is usually taken by *Advaita Vedantins* as an ontological apposition of knowledge and is concerned with our inquiry into the very nature of consciousness. Philosophically, as

the concept is inevitably related with our experiences, in the context of which we talk about it, it requires a cognitive inquiry into the very basis of our experiences viz. objects of cognition, the self-cognition and the cognition itself and, for the present discussion in this paper, it is concept of perpetual and indivisible awareness itself. It is direct knowledge and is beyond the knowledge by sources, epistemic-proofs, etc., valued much as a significant subject matter of epistemology in general. The term 'beyond' is not used in the sense of transcendental, or trans-experience but that of very cognitive foundation of all experiences: empirical and trans-empirical. However, we do not deny that the beyond as taken in our view is transcendental and trans-experience also.

In the present discussion I am not concerned with the witness consciousness as ontological concept with which *Vedānta* as a religion is concerned but with providing a critique of experience as found in the text and its utility in indicating the witness-consciousness.²

The text talks generally about two categories of different sorts of experiences 1-empirical experiences (*Aparā-Vidyā*) and 2-Trans-empirical experiences (*Parā-Vidyā*). The experiences acquired by our sensory perception, inference and other forms of reasoning which are often valued as epistemological justifications and empirical-evidences for providing certainty to them are all included in the former category. These experiences are mediate or indirect as they are relative to knowing faculties and, are knowledge conditioned. They are relational to the triad of experiencer, experiences and the object-experienced. This category of experiences to the best of the value given by the text to them helps the acquisition of *preyas* (mundane-prosperity) the acquisition and enjoyment of which completely traps the individual (*jīva*) and keeps him away from his spirit³. However I am not going to explore the issues concerning trapping as I have referred to it only to show that in the realm of these experiences our whole mentality and dispositions are committed to the sphere of subject, object and their relationship and that our mind is fit only to grasp the objective mode of experiences. Our whole psyche is

operated by interests and suffers from enjoying pleasure and pain as per satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the interest. We will discuss the arguments given by the text for refuting empirical experiences in knowing the witness consciousness after a few steps but before that, think it useful to clarify that there is apparent duality in between the empirical and transempirical experiences and that philosophical reflections are confined only to the former and the latter is the object of religious realisation and, thus, for those who are confined to the former the latter is beyond and these who are doing philosophy the latter kind of it does not stand significantly as an object proper of philosophy. Even there is mention of trans- experience being i.e. *Brahman* or *sāksi-Caitanya* at the level of which both of the experiences-empirical and trans-empirical are not possible.¹ However, these experiences are not meaningless first because only in the context of these experiences the trans-experience becomes a legitimate issue for discussion and second that without the gradual transcendence from the empirical and trans-empirical one can not reach that state and, hence, useful for a spiritual seeker. *What is not transcended in the process is transcendence itself which is luminous by nature. It is self-illuminated and illuminating principle ubiquitously given as the very soul of all beings. It is the self-illuminated on which different kinds of consciousness are ascribed differently as per the process involved in the cognitive activities in relation to which (as witnessed) it is called witness-self. This trans experience as self luminous is the basis of all experience and yet beyond them is witness-consciousness.* The same reality *Brahman* is called by the term *sāksi-Caitanya* by the virtue of it as perpetually illuminating principle of everything and thought presented before it as conditioned and transient in nature.

The text on the basis of certain popular arguments rejects experiences by perception as a means to know the beyond. Perceptual experiences are relational to the senses which perceive and to the objects perceived and can not operate for that which is not an object at all. If it is said that subjective entities are also perceived even then, its performance is of no use in regard with that which is neither an object nor a subject in

both of the senses of mental dispositions and of the mind as a knower. Perceptual experiences are changing instants and are sublated by the next of it. Not only that but it varies from person to person according to their difference in perceiving capacity, distance in time and space, defects in sensing, in senses and other factors. It contradicts itself as it suffers from the defects of senses, external facts and changing nature of the object they perceive. Perception is concerned only with the outwardly superficial aspects and the senses can not perceive thing in its entirety.⁵ *The most significant matter of fact about the sensory perception is that the senses are fixed naturally in their own concerned objects in a way that the object of a particular sense is beyond for the other senses, for example, the object, say verbal noises, in which auditory sense is fixed is almost beyond for the other sense that is visual sense which is fixed only in form and colour (rūpa) and likewise rūpa(form) and colour are beyond for the auditory sense and similar is the case with objects of other senses.* We can grasp only the objects having qualities but the things having no such qualities cannot be grasped by experience. Like Vedāntic text modern sciences and cognitive philosophies also accept that the senses do not grasp the thing-in-itself but the image of thing as confronted with them or sense-data which is the object of experience and not the experience itself. We drink water but water is not experience. We experience sweet or severe but sweetness or otherwise inhered in external objects are not the experience. Experience is the idea of sweet or severe having no physiological quality like extension, form, etc. and hence a cognitive unit and, hence, internal while the senses are naturally fixed only in the external object. How can that which has no form, colour, other qualities and properties be known by perception?

Inference is given primary importance among sources of knowledge and that most of our rational operations are based on different kinds of inferential experience. According to critiques of inference as the source of knowing beyond, it is conjectural and the certainty of it is based on *anvayavyatireka* (agreement-disagreement) and, thus, it is relative not only

to perception the futility of which has already been discussed in earlier paragraph but to the other factors like evidences, the means and the end or the conclusion to be derived. Inferential experiences are not self-established and require consciousness as its base. One can infer self-consciousness as the base of such experiences but witness-consciousness can not be inferred by the same logic⁶; it is known directly as the base of all experiences including inference. Even if it is taken as inferred, that will be no more than an experience and the experience cannot infer itself and, hence, is not established by itself.

The operation of self consciousness is encircled by egoity and subtle body to *susupti* (sleeping-consciousness) from waking consciousness and vice-versa. We find that there is discontinuity or even complete absence as in faint or in deep sleep. The changing consciousness cannot know itself as changing and cannot know its own changes as well. Different sorts of consciousness according to *Vedānta* are ascriptions to the witness-self which is the perpetual base of all conscious stages ascribed to it and is transcendental not only to experiences but to these subject and object ascribed also. Nothing will be founded if this foundational illumination (witness-self) persisting uniformly and breaklessly as the illuminating principle of all of them is denied. It is witness (*Sākṣī*) because it is non attached, unaffected, changeless, perpetually persisting and ubiquitously given principle of illumination by nature. *Vedāntins* will not disagree to the idea that there is no other appropriate definition of *sākṣī- Caitanya* than the self-illuminated and illuminating principle before which every thing is presented with the limitation that this definition is merely an other designation to *Sākṣī-Caitanya*.

The seers are the realizers of spirit transcendental in nature and their trans-empirical experiences are given in the form of statements of the *Vedas and Upaniṣads*. In fact it is on the basis of these statements that we are acquainted with the idea that there is something which is trans-empirically existent and which at the same time is the base of all experiences (*avijñātam vijñātṛ*). As they cannot be put in a way to make

the truth visualised on the ordinary plane of experiences the statement concerning them are only a device through which they try to express their experiences of the beyond and as such their realisation as-it-is cannot be taken as the object proper of our ordinary experiences. However, they are of vital importance for philosophical purposes as they provide incentive and direction to our investigation into the very possibility and nature of the truth beyond.

The beyond may be implicated as the basis or ontological apposition of cognition and of experiences of objects of cognition but it is false in cases if the antecedent is true and the consequent is false. Again, even if it is true, there is every possibility that its antecedent and consequent both may be presumptuous and, hence, it may logically be true but cognitively false. Imposition of something of unknown character does not help to know the beyond. Imposition is based on similarity and, thus, it may provide analogous knowledge, but the similarity of unknown beyond with known empirical experiences is not legitimately possible and, hence, unfounded. We shall discuss analogy in the next paragraph. We want to say in very brief that even intuitive experiences are also not free from psychologism and from logical and pragmatic errors and it is very difficult to make those experiences experiential to ordinary state.

There is no possibility of sensory experience of the senses themselves and, thus, senses are beyond the sensory experience they sense. Senses are known by the intellect. As for the particular function they perform the respective senses are known by inference or by implication as the substratum of the function they perform and like wise the intellect cannot know itself though it is known by inference or implication made on the basis of experiences as their ontological apposition. The intellect is endowed with the capacity to infer any conclusion regarding those beyond its grasp on the basis of some presumed premises but then the premises are accepted either as self-proved or self-established or presumptuous. Nothing is gained if they are presumptuous but if they are taken as self-proved the conclusion derived on their basis is taken as true but it adds nothing to the position of a self-proved witness-self which needs no proof.

During this discussion we come to the fact that the senses are beyond from the sensory perception, that intellect is beyond from its own activities and as the intellect is not self-illuminated; it is illuminated by the consciousness which is beyond, not only from sensory and intellectual experiences but from the senses and the intellect as well also; they can not help knowing their luminous-principle which is beyond them. *If it will be known as an object it will cease to be the knower and if the knower is taken as intellect it will not be illuminated by itself.* Intellect is *antaḥkaraṇāvacchinna*-consciousness and, hence, it is not self-illuminated while *Vedānta* accept *Sākṣi -Caitanya* as self illuminated. *It is idea of the self illuminated nature of sākṣi chaitanya propounded in the text which leads us to a conclusion that it is non-different from Brahman because Brahman in Vedānta is the non-dual Reality and is only Self-illuminated-(reality) by nature or that the Brahman and Sākṣi- Caitanya are non-different.* It is perhaps with the view of self-illuminated and illuminating principle of subject and object that the conscious principle is designated as *sākṣi-chaitanya*, and that with the view of ultimate as the principle of existence, illumination and bliss it is called *Brahman*. So far as the idea of the nature of witness-self as pure consciousness and self illuminated principle is concerned the two are non-different.

The most significant matter of fact to be observed as the *Upaniṣadic* method of saying is that the seers have tried to make their trans-experience and trans-empirical experiences understandable to ordinary minds with the help of allegories myths and analogies which indicate the beyond in a metaphorical way.⁷ We confine our observation only to alalogies and particularly to the analogy of different states of waking, dreaming and sleeping which is given high importance in the text ⁸ to describe metaphorically the character of *Sākṣi-Caitanya* in different kinds of experiences of those states. Here, it is significant to say that this analogy is distinguished from that of others given in the text for example the anology pot-space, rope-snake based on experiences of external world in which there is duality of percipient and adjuncts of which both are ultimately false and, thus, they describe the non-duality of the Reality

only metaphorically which ultimately is unfit for removing the sense of duality at conceptual level and logical difficulties of the experience of non-duality as well.

Unlike others, in the analogy based on experiences of different states of waking, dreaming and sleeping there is no room for prior existence of any external thing like rope or pot distinct from percipient because the objects experienced in waking state are internal to that state as those experienced in dreams are internal to that state and just as we wake up from dream state the dream objects disappear likewise, when we wake up from waking state the experiences of waking objects will be no more existents. Although there is no experience of waking and dreaming objects in sleeping (*sarvavyvahāra śūnya*), this state is also accompanied by traces of objects. The objects of this or that kind has always been the objects of experience in waking and dreaming consciousness. The major difference in between these two states is that the waking objects are transcended in the dreaming and vice versa. Different from these two states both of the objects of waking and dreaming are transcended is sleeping. In other words neither the external world of waking nor the internal world (*Vāsanā*) of dreaming are experienced in sleeping but as there is *Vāsanā* itself without its dispositions, as the object of experience, we have the experience like 'I slept without any object to disturb (*aham sukham svāpsam*)'⁹ This *Vāsanā* without disturbance is transcended in *Turiyā* which transcends all the limitations of experiences, objects of experiences and the experiencer themselves. *Turiya* consciousness is witness-consciousness. A passage from *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* make it more clear according to which just as a hawk having sharp wings flies every where without being attached to anywhere at last comes to its *nest* when tired, the witness-self is unaffected without getting any attachment to any or all of the waking, dreaming and sleeping experiences of the I-consciousness.¹⁰ The witness-self is self-illuminated and ubiquitously given principle perpetually lying as the base of all- the experiencer (I-consciousness), the experiences and the object of experience and that is why when ego or I-consciousness gets back from sleep or dream to

waking state it finds itself as losing nothing of its ability naturally assigned to it in spite of passing through the different stages. Even though it does not get back (if one dies) the witness-self as the witness of the deeds done in past life is perpetually there with self (*jīvātma*) as its illuminating force by the virtue of which the *Jīvātma* presents it-self in life after death and in rebirth according to the fruits of its Karmas (past-deeds). According to the text there is redemption from the chains of life and death only when *Jīvātma* gets rid of its witnessed-character or that it gets redemption from I-ness and realises its pure conscious, self-illuminated nature. At the level when witness-self is itself realised there is no question of *Sākṣī* which is called so only in relation to those of which it is witness, at this level, it gets rid of all subject-object sphere; it is *Brahman*.

Advaita-Vedānta observes the principle of *Sākṣī-Caitanya* as the principle of objectivity. R. R. Pandey writes "The concept of *Saksin* is a typical notion of *Advaita* which may be called the principle of objectivity. By the principle of objectivity is meant that the principle reveals an object or a state as it is in a non-personal way."¹¹ Prof. Pandey seems right in observing the *Sākṣī* as a principle of objectivity because the text illustrates it as a perpetually given illuminating force of a self-illuminated character and as it is ubiquitously given principle of illumination, luminosity is not personal to any or private being but given as all pervasive luminosity like that of *Bhartrhari's śabda- Brahman*.¹² It is the cultural, psychological and other allegiance of our intellect (*Buddhi*) on account of which *Sākṣī-Caitanya* is taken differently to different persons, changing and relative to the experiences of the experiencer (*Buddhi*) but it can not be denied as the objective principle of all that is experienced and the experiencer as well which cease to be so in absence of this illumination and in that case there will be no possibility of any kind of knowledge also. The knower (*Buddhi*) itself is illuminated by this non-dual principle of objectivity and there is no other definition of *Sākṣī-Caitanya* except ubiquitously given perpetual luminosity revealing everything in a non-personal way. As it is the basic principle non-attached to any experience or object of experience it illuminates and as it illuminates them all

objectively without any interest, this illumination is illumination in non-personal way. This also suggests a unique idea according to which this illumination is the cognitive base of awareness of the intellect, object and the experiences themselves which it illuminates.

It may be asked if it is being of awareness, it will be known by perception, inference, verbal statements, implication and other experiences and then it will be an object and, hence, relative but it is not so. It is a foundational principle of illumination. From the discussion in the lines mentioned above it will be confusing to take that identical or sameness of the cognition of the experiencer and the experiences is possible only by the principle of *Sākṣī-Caitanya*. If it is so then *Sākṣī-Caitanya* has to be accepted as universal in character, but this is not proper. Witness self is not universal in any of the following two senses. 1- It is not an abstraction: experience or concept: from different individual objects of experience or from the experiencer themselves and 2- It is not the object of cognition or illumination and not the cause of the identical cognition of the objects in their different occurrences and instances of which universal is the cause. *Advaita Vedāntin* like *Bhartrhari*¹³ makes a difference between cognition and the cognition of the objects in order to elucidate the indivisibility of cognition and to differentiate cognition from the objects of cognition which may either be individual in some cases or universal in other cases. The cognition is not another or an object in a cognition while the objects of cognition are cognized as objects in that cognition. Cognition cannot be the object of another cognition also (*na ca jñānam jñānāntara pratyakṣam*)¹⁴. In other words the objects of or content of knowledge is relational to that knowledge or to an other knowledge but knowledge itself is foundational. Just as a lamp needs no other lamp in order to be lit, the cognition itself needs no object or experience in order to be known. It will cease to be knowledge if it is known as object. Objects of knowledge may be individual or universal which are known in a knowledge but cognition itself is neither an object-individual-or universal nor the knower (*Buddhi*) which is relative to witness-consciousness for their own illumination. Individual and univer-

sal are adjuncts of percipient but witness-self is beyond all of them.¹⁵ They cannot transcend themselves but witness-self, by nature, is transcendence. As the fire does not cognize fire nor does it cognize itself, everything is presented directly to the witness-self, otherwise, nothing will be founded at all.

The point discussed in the lines just mentioned in the above paragraph has been more clearly established by the *Vedāntins* at the occasion of exploring their observation on the *Upaniṣadic* statement which reads as follows:- '*Na hi draṣṭurdr̥ṣṭerviparilopo vidyate*' *vināśitvāt Na tu taddvīṭyamasti tato anyad vibhaktam yat paśyet*¹⁶ The text is quite obviously of the view that as there is no possibility of objects of consciousness, there is no possibility of subject-object (*Dṛk* and *Dr̥śya*) relationship or content of experiences at the level of illumination itself, the *dr̥ṣṭi*¹⁷ does not experience itself because it is neither a subject nor an object. It is also clear from it that it is not the *draṣṭā* or *pramātā* (self-consciousness) which is ascribed to perpetual illuminating principle (witness-self) but the *dr̥ṣṭi* (awareness or illumination itself) which is never destroyed or discontinued and is neither a subject nor an object nor the relation between the two but the knowledge itself. The same matter of fact is observed in the statement *Na hi vijñāturvijñāterviparilopo' vidyate vināśitvāt*,¹⁸ according to which it is not *vijñāta* or *dr̥ṣṭā* (knower who is called relatively so as it knows something or it is the subject of an object) but the *vijñapti* or *dr̥ṣṭi* (knowledge itself eternally self-luminous and is never destroyed or sublated.) The use of possessive case in *dr̥ṣṭurdr̥ṣṭeḥ* and *vijñāturvijñāteḥ* may be taken in terms of duality in between the illuminator and luminosity but *Advaitins* will not accept such duality as they do not assume any difference in designating the luminosity itself as the perpetual illuminator and the use of possessive case is significant only for those who can't understand the indivisible otherwise. *Witness-self is not draṣṭā but dr̥ṣṭi which is the principle of illumination of all distinctions of subject and object. There is no possibility of any case-relation in between the draṣṭā and the dr̥ṣṭi which are non-different at the level of witness-self.* The indivisible awareness itself is not subject to any

change. There is no subject-object splice or split in awareness itself and that there is no possibility of its being limited by space and time as it is all pervasive. It is this pervasive-ness that it has been termed by *Chāndogyaopaniṣad* as *bhūmā*.¹⁹ As awareness of object in usual communication provides bliss, the awareness itself is bliss (*Vijñānamānandam*). The indivisible awareness is indivisible bliss itself. It is immediate and is realised by aspirant who by philosophical reflection (*Manana*) and religious means (*sādhana*) realises himself as awareness and bliss (*sa yo ha vai tat paramam Brahman veda Brahmaiva bhavati*)²⁰

The Self-beyond is not changing in its experiences from moment to moment. It is indivisible awareness itself by nature and as there is no possibility of any division and change or parts in awareness itself and as it is beyond our experience, indivisible and perpetually existent, we can neither reject it nor accept it on the basis of experiences. We reject or affirm only the objects of cognition but not the cognition itself. Even in a rejection what is rejected or affirmed is the object of rejection or affirmation but not the cognition itself and rejection or affirmation ceases to be so if cognition of them is denied. It is the illuminating principle of all sort of experiences even of rejection-affirmation, etc., also and, at the same time, is independent not only from all of them but from the intellect (I-ness) which experiences them.

The purpose of my discussion on the concept of *Sākṣī-Caitanya* as mentioned above is confined only to show that though *Sākṣī-Caitanya* is beyond experience as it is a trans-empirical or beyond subject-object world, it is discriminately termed so only in the context of the experience²¹. If there is no context of experiences, there will be no occasion for talking about their illuminating principle and designating it as witness and if there is no perpetually given illumination there will be no possibility of cognition, the object of cognition and of the cognizer itself. If there is nothing to be witnessed for what reason it will be the witness-self. It is awareness or pure consciousness itself and is witness of the experiences presented before it during different states of I-Consciousness.

The intellect is subject and the experiences are the objects but *Sākṣī-Caitanya* is neither a subject nor an object but transcendental to both. It illuminates both the subject, the object and their relation but itself is self-luminous.²² This self-illuminated is immediacy and is directly known as the awareness of the awarenesses it illuminates (*Pratibodha veditam*). Some of the scholars are of the view that we dream a dream in a dream and the witness consciousness is different from the dreaming consciousness and from the dream on the basis of which dreaming a dream in a dream is experienced in dreaming state. If *Sākṣī-Caitanya* as separate from the dreaming consciousness and that of the dream dreamt in that consciousness as well as is not accepted how can the dreaming of a dream in a dream be experienced? But, in my opinion, the dream-experience (of dream) in dreaming state and the object of that experience i.e. dream are experienced differently only with the differences of objects in dreaming and that of the experience of it by dreaming-consciousness and by this distinction the witness-consciousness is not discriminately admitted. In other words such an independent consciousness is not an experienced idea or the objects of ideas (dreaming state and the objects of dream) and, thus, with these differences to accept the *Sākṣī-Caitanya* which is beyond the dreaming state and the object of dream (may be a dream), as independent consciousness separated from the dream experience and the object of experience (dreaming) is not legitimate. It is contradiction in terms to say the independence of dreaming consciousness of a dream. *Sākṣī-Caitanya*, in fact, is none of them but beyond. Dreaming a dream in a dreaming-consciousness is the object of that consciousness and, thus, there is no case of experience of witness-consciousness in dreaming a dream in a dream internal to that state. Witness-consciousness as the basis not only of the dreaming experience but of the dreaming consciousness also is self-evident though it is known by presumption as the substratum of them.

After removal of I-ness in liberation, where it does not exist, there is no case of presenting it before *Sākṣī-Caitanya* and, thus, there is no need for such a designation as *Sākṣī-Caitanya* because at that state one realizes 'all is *Brahman*' (*Sarvam khalu idam Brahman*). However, so far

I-ness exists the theoretical importance of concept of *Sākṣī* can not be denied as its illuminating principle.

So far as to the question of theoretical need of the concept of *Sākṣī-Caitanya* apart from the *Brahman* and *Jīva*, in non-dualistic philosophy of *Advaita Vedānta* is concerned, we come to remind two statements according to which 1. - The individual self (*Jīva*) comparable to the body of *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (mind) and *ahaṅkāra* (ego) which is a product of *māyā* (*Prakṛti* in *Sāṅkhya*) is not self-illuminated and as such it needs an illuminating principle in order to be illuminated. The individual self is not illuminating principle by itself. *Sākṣī-Caitanya* is the designation of the illuminating principle of it as, without it, nothing can be illuminated. Though, it illuminates the individual self (intellect), it is not subject to the changes of self and it is only by ignorance that he intellect is identified itself as the *Pramātā* (illuminator) in relation to its experiences which are not possible if intellect itself is not illuminated by the witness-consciousness. As the *Brahman* in *Advaita Vedānta* is the only illuminator which is non-dual, what is the theoretical need of *Sākṣī-Caitanya*? 2. It is true to say that *Brahman* is non-dual reality in the holistic philosophy of *Advaita* but it is designated so not only not in relation to conditioned and related knowledge but also not in relation to intellect or individual self and if this is not the case *Advaitins* will face the problem of apparent duality in between the conditioned and unconditioned. In order to remove the duality it is consistent to accept that though *Brahman* is the only non-dual-reality it is all pervading and ubiquitously given principle of illumination and this ubiquitously given principle of illumination in relation to intellect it illuminates in a non-personal way is designated as *Sākṣī-Caitanya* who as the illuminator of intellect is characterised *Sākṣī-Caitanya* only because all the activities of intellect is presented before it. The illuminating principle is non-attached, non-effected from any activities, experiences of the intellect and the intellect itself which it illuminates. By this concept *Advaitins* illustrate the idea of constant presence of absolute *saccidananda* in the inner most of

the individual self as its illuminator.

Concluding the whole discussion it can fairly be said that our knowledge is confined to the world of experience and the witness-self as the illuminating principle of the world of experience is ubiquitously given. This luminous principle needs no epistemic-justification and empirical-evidences which work in the world of empirical experiences only. It is foundational to epistemic justifications and empirical evidences which cannot function without this principle. This principle is actually self-illuminated but in order to convince others about its self-luminosity we provide inference, verbal authority, implications, imposition, direct perception and other proofs. Ultimately, it stands self-proved as the perceptual cognitive basis of all cognitive activities including proofs. It is knowledge itself and is known directly as the abiding principle in all cognition of the objects acquired through the cognitive process (*Pratibodha viditam*). We provide arguments to prove its existence but as all proofs, evidences, etc. function in the circuit of empirical world of experiences based on objective way of thinking, the luminous, though it illuminates them all, is beyond the world of their function. Here lies the limitation of experience in describing the witness-self which is beyond the world of experiences. *By the use of the terms 'transcendental' and 'beyond' we do not mean utter-void or some existence belonging to a world separate from the world of spirit. These terms are used in the text only to indicate the limitation of our knowledge, acquired by the knowing process, in knowing the witness-consciousness which as the basis of cognition and the intellect (buddhi) itself is ubiquitously given as their illuminating principle. It is witness not because it witnesses itself as there is no such need for a principle which by nature is witness. It is witness only because it witnesses the experiences of the objective or relative and conditioned world of subjects-and-objects comprising changes, defects and other limitations presented before it. The witness is not an experience as a mental outcome because a witness is independent awareness itself (tatastha) and is non-attached from any activity of the intellect, object of the intellect and the intellect itself. Philosophically, it is not an object:*

empirical or transcendental : subject or object : but pure awareness itself by nature. Philosophical reflection as cognitive activity par excellence comes to the pure awareness not only by inference or implication as the ontological substratum of all cognitive activities but as self-proved or given principle of all awareness i.e., awareness itself which is described by the text as truth and bliss also.

NOTES

1. A detailed discussion on the disinterested knowledge under the topic entitled "Possibility of disinterested knowledge: A Bhartiharian approach "by the same author is published in JICPR Vol XV : no3, 1998, pp 47-67.
2. So far the concept of Sākṣī as an ontological concept is concerned, we suggest those interested in ontological and axiological aspects of Sākṣī-Caitanya to go through the scholarly works, entitled 'Concept of Sākṣī in Advaita Vedānta, by A.K. Chatterji and R.R.Dravid published by Banaras Hindu University. 1979 And also Karl Potter's Encyclopaedia of Indian philosophy, Vol-III 1981.
3. Kath-up. 12 1-8
4. Sarva Vyavahāra Śūnya.
5. Parañci Khāni Vyatṛṇat svamibhūh tasmātparāṇpasyati nāntarātman. Kathopaniṣad. 211
6. Naiṣā tarkena matirāpaneya. Kathopaniṣad 129 As there is nothing similar to Sākṣī-Caitanya and as there is no possibility of its sensory perception there is no possibility of inference of it.
7. In Vedānta, the nature, function and relevance of allegories, myths, parables and analogy in understanding the trans-empirical experiences is a very wide issue and needs an independent research work.
8. The analogy of the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping is found in the older Upaniṣads. See, Brh up, 439-38. Praśna.up. Caturthapraśnottara.

9. A number of philosophers, psychologists and scientists have tried to solve the most peturbing problem of experience in sleeping (susupti). To me, philosophical solution to this problem seems stisfatory. According to the philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, in sleep, the senses, the vital air (Prāṇa) and the mind are not at work though they are not dead. One gets rid of all experiences of waking and dreaming but he is neither dead nor liberated as he comes back to dream or to waking. How can his experience 'I slept without any object to disturb' be explained? Two fold solution of the problem is given by the text. According to first-particular experiences of particularities and universalities are the factors which disturb us in waking and dreaming and as consciousness in susupti (sleep) pervades the whole body in form of a different experience universal in nature and void of all particularities one is not disturbed in sleep. 'yadāmanodavāgnivadaviśeṣa vijñāna rūpeṇa kṛtam śarīram vyapyavatiṣṭhate tadā susupto bhavati' Praśna. Upanishad bhāṣya 4/6. According to the second, the senses, the object-consciousness and the self-consciousness are at rest in sleep. There is only concealment and not projection of ignorance in sleep. The stopping of projecting activities of I-ness for the time being keeps him close to his real nature that is witness-self which is beyond all disturbances where all disturbing factors lying dormant and unmanifested. When I-ness gets back to waking from sleeping only then it involves itself in its activities of object consciousness and self-consciousness and then it comes to know the sleeping experiences (aham sukham syāpsam) by presumption (arthāpatti) and non-apprehension of waking and sleeping experiences. (anupalabdhi).
10. Brh.Up.4/3/19
11. Scientific Temper and Advaita Vedānta, R.R.Pandey, P.61, Śureshonmesh Prakashana Varanasi, 1991.
12. Bhartṛhari's view of Sabda-Brahman as the self luminous and illuminating principle, has been discussed in great detail and clarity in an unpublished project entitled 'Bhartṛhari's Philosophy of Language' under the General Fellowship award, ICPR, 1994-96 by the same author.
13. For Bhartṛhari's view of difference between cognition itself and the cognition

of the objects see my paper entitled 'Cognition, Being and Possibility of Expressions; A Bhartrhariian Approach' JICPR Vol. XIV.No.1 p.89, 1996 and "JICPR Vol.XV NO.3,p.55,1998.

14. Iṣṭasiddhi p.61.
15. Yato vāconivartanteaprāpya manasā saḥ Tai.Up. 2/4/1.
16. Brh.up 4/3/23.
17. If Pramātā in the context of these statements is taken as knower (self-conscious being), it will not be self-luminous to which difference of Pramātā and Pramātr is not applicable as it is pure knowledge itself void of all difference. The term knower' is relative to what it knows and a knower is knower only when it knows. The text only says that the Dṛṣṭi of knower is perpetual and it is the specific mention of drsti in the text as perpetual that I have taken the term dṛṣṭi for knowledge itself analogous to the uses like Jivasya caitanyam' in which jīva is transient while caitanyam (consciousness) is perpetual.
18. Ibid 4/3/30,32.
19. Ch.up 7/23/1.
20. Mu.up 3/2/9.
21. Encyclopaedia of Indian Philosophy Vol. III. K. Potter's summary of Naiskarmasiddhi book 2. Stanza 74-96,p.540.
22. Tamevabhāntamanubhāti Sarvam Tasya bhāsā Sarvamidam Vibhāti, Kath. Up, 2/2/15.