

human experiential ontology according to the Vedantic tradition of Sri Śaṅkara.

The treatment of the topic in the book is exceptionally systematic and logical and the style is exquisitely beautiful. The philosophical, epistemological and religious nuances of "consciousness" are well touched upon and inter-related from the eastern and western points of view. The introductory chapter is an analysis of the Advaitic system which is a non-dualistic and gnosis-oriented philosophy. Śaṅkara's vision of Brahman as higher gnosis (*para vidyā*) and the world a lower gnosis (*apara vidyā*), and the experience of liberation (*moksha*) as the highest value of life are the various levels of consciousness.

"Absolute Consciousness" (*Cit*) is described as "Existence and Intelligence" (p. 27), and its main function is self-revelation, by which the Absolute manifests His self-luminous character to the *cit* (consciousness) of man, the individual self. The individual self reflects in himself the Consciousness of the Supreme Self but in a lower level, and this varies from person to person. There is a hierarchy of the modified consciousness in man and the levels of consciousness in the ascending order are the waking experience, the dream, the dreamless sleep, and the pure consciousness as such. The topmost level is called by the Advaitins *turiya* which is the state of the realization of Absolute Consciousness at the maximum degree possible to human beings. It is the state of freedom achieved in the innermost layer of human consciousness where a certain experience of the identity of human *cit* with the *Cit* of the Absolute is obtained. This highest form of "identity-experience" (*advaita*) or the experience of non-duality in human consciousness is not that easily comparable with anything of its kind in the West.

Here is the difficulty with comparative philosophy and an analysis therein attempted by the author. The author is of the opinion that the Advaitins are "irrational and non-logical." But the author's approach to consciousness in the sense of Advaita Vedanta is from the standpoint of his western understanding of consciousness (an *a-priori* dogmatic approach). He is preoccupied with verifying whether the aspects of the western treatment of consciousness are found in the Advaitic vision. This approach leads to a forcible imposition of the western trends on the "Advaitic consciousness." The way to comprehend the Advaitic traditions is by "listening" (*śravaṇa*) to, and "understanding"