

Concept of *Brahman* as *Vijñāna* in the Light of *Veda(s)* and *Upaniṣad(s)*

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Abstract

This paper follows the *Vedic* perspective in order to delineate the concepts of *Brahman* and *Vijñāna*. Truth and oneness are the fundamental attributes of *Brahman*. The possibility of the falsity of *Brahman* cannot be applied to it due to its absolute and sublimated one-centred nature, as presented in the epitomes of non-duality. The paper is divided into four parts. Part one reassesses the oneness-nature of *Brahman*, the relationship between “*Sambhūti*” and “*Asambhūti*,” and *Prāṇa*, drawing on the *Veda(s)* within the construction of *Brahman* as *Vijñāna*. Part two examines the differential meanings of the terms—*Vijñātmā*, *Vijñāta*, and *Vijñānāti*—as mentioned in the *Upaniṣad(s)* in respect of *Brahman* as *Vijñāna*. The subsequent part examines the interrelation between *Brahman* and *Vijñāna* from both transcendental and empirical perspectives within the framework of *Śankarāchārya's* non-dualistic philosophy. Regarding the paradox, a legitimate question about the portrayal of *Brahman* is how it can be imposed and overcome. At the stage of the epilogue, a brief but significant conclusion will be presented.

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1. Introduction

Brahman is the Supreme Being, described in various ways as omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. This study places special emphasis on the Science of the Soul (*Vijñātmā*), also referred to as *Vijñāna*, and explores to what extent the term *Vijñāna* can be integrated with the nature of *Brahman* in Vedic literature—solicit—*Veda(s)* and *Upaniṣad(s)*.

Apart from these, the notion of the *Brahman* can be explored on the basic epitome of the transcendent and empirical. These apparatuses reveal the reflections and variant colours of the rays of the Supreme Being—*Brahman*.

Having provided a brief introduction of the paper, the focus point will now shift to the primary objective of part one. The primary objective of the manuscript will be delineated accordingly. In order to understand the interrelation of the said term within the portrayal of *Brahman* in the *Vedic* Scriptures, it is essential to understand beforehand the etymological meaning of *Brahman*.

The etymological meaning of the word “*Brahman*” has been derived from the combination of the two terms ‘*Vriha*’ and ‘*Man.*’ ‘*Vriha*’ means the Great, sublime, and much higher.¹ According to *Śaṅkarāchāryā*, *Brahman* is the one and only one greatest reality of the cosmos. *Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.2 (*janmādy asya yataḥ*²) and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1 (*ekam evādvitīyam*³)

2. Etymological meaning of Veda

The word “*Veda*” is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘*vid*’, which means “knowledge.” The one-centred nature of *Brahman* is acknowledged and is related to the principle of cause and effect. In the *Yajur Veda Saṁhitā*⁴, the terms *Sambhūti* and *Asambhūti* are used to express the knowledge of *Brahman*.

¹ Pāṇini, *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, Nirvacana-prakaraṇam.

² Śaṅkarācārya, *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya* (Swami Gambhīrānanda, Trans., 2021), on 1.1.2, p. 13.

³ *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (Lokeśwarānanda, 2014, p. 489).

⁴ *Śukla Yajurveda*. Catuvāriṃśa Adhyāya, Mantras 11–15.

2.1. Understanding *Brahman* in the *Veda*

The *Veda* explores the one-centred nature of the eternal Being, known as *Brahman*. *HE* is the creator of the world. This one and eternal *Brahman* is described with many names and forms in *Vedic literature*.

In the *Śukla Yajur Veda* (Chapter: 40, Verses 8-11), or *Īśa Upaniṣad* (Verses: 12 and 13), the notion of the *Sambhūti–Asambhūti* as well as *Smbhaba–Asambhaba* has been uttered⁵ as a form of ultimate knowledge. The eternal *Brahman* is associated with the aspect of *Asambhūti*, while the manifested universe, as the expression of *Brahman*'s nature, is associated with the aspect of *Sambhūti*. The combined term *Sambhūti–Asambhūti* refers, respectively, to *Kārya Brahman* (*Vyākta*, a form of *Hiraṇyagarbha*) and to *Prakṛti*, *Jagat*, *Kāraṇa*, or *Avyākta*. In the *Yajur Veda Samhitā*, the eternal *Brahman* is presented as having two aspects—one representing the cause, and the other representing the effect.

In the *Ṛg Veda*, *Prāṇa* is described as the force of divine energy. This divine energy is closely associated with the forces of nature, including fire (*Agni*), the sun (*Sūrya*), the wind (*Vāyu*), and the rain (*Vāri*). These forces are regarded as manifestations of *Brahman*'s immanent power in the world, which is sustained and governed by *Prāṇa*.

However, it is mentioned in the verse *Ṛg Veda(s)* in this way that “*indraṇ mitraṇ varunamagnimahiratho divya suparno garuatman; ekaṃ sdivpra bahudhā badanti surjaṃ yamaṃ matariswanamahu.*”⁶ (*Ṛg Veda*, 1.164.46)

The names are *Agni*, *Indra*, *Vāyū*, *Mitra*, *Rudra*, and *Varuna*.

“*ekaṃ sdivprā bahudhā vadanti*” (*Ṛg Veda*, 1.164.46.)

It is a significant part of the verse. The meaning of the verse is that ‘*eka*’ (One) is turned in to the ‘*bahu*’ (many). The ‘*eka*’ or cause of the universe is the un-manifested form of the *Brahman*, which is called ‘*Asambhūti*’. But, ‘*bahu*’ or the effects of the universe are called ‘*Sambhūti*’, which is identified with God.

⁵ Griffith, Ralph T.H., *The White Yajurveda* (1899, p. 306), on *Īśa Upaniṣad* 12–13.

⁶*Ṛg Veda*, 1.164.46.

A passage from the famous book of the author Sukumari Bhattacharji, entitled “*Literature in the Vedic Age*”, Vol.II that “*Agni, Indra and Sūrya - and they excelled, Agni through lustre, Indra through prowess and Sūrya through brilliance.*”^{1499,7}(Bhattacharji 1986, 123)

God has various names and forms according to the functional capacity of *Kārya Brahman* (God / the effect of *Brahman*). However, this does not imply that these forms are entirely different from one another. In truth, they are identical, operating through the will of *Brahman*. Consequently, it can be summarized that all things originate from the one supreme reality

2.2. Brahman as the cosmic principle & the ultimate reality

Brahman is the ultimate reality that regulates the cosmos. *Prāṇa*, *manas*, *vijñāna*, and *ānanda* represent essential aspects of this ultimate reality in the cosmic order. The human gross body is constituted of various limbs, multiple vital layers, and particles. This gross body is incessantly sustained and revealed by the power of *Prāṇa*. Without the subtle body (*Prāṇa*), the gross body has no supreme value. *Brahman*, *God*, *soul*, and *body* are always interconnected. This *Prāṇa* is associated with the cosmic order (*Ṛta*)—the breath of *Brahman*, the highest Self in this cosmic reality, which is also called *Brahman*.

Apart from these, the Vedic texts also associate the vital breath (*Prāṇa*) intimately with the sacred syllable *Om* (*Aum*). *Om* is regarded as one of the most ancient and primordial sounds.

In Sanskrit, *Om* (*Aum*) is composed of three syllables — *A*, *U*, and *M* — and is said to be derived from the root ‘*Ab*’. From these three syllables, the entire existence of the universe is believed to have manifested and evolved.

It is mentioned prominently in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, specifically in verses 1.1.1, 1.1.2, and 8.1.1. However, ‘*A*’ symbolizes the beginning, the subsequent syllable ‘*U*’ signifies continuation or identity, and the final syllable ‘*M*’ denotes dissolution. The profound interconnection of *A*, *U*, and *M* signifies that within *Om* reside all the powers of creation, preservation, and dissolution of the cosmos.

The significant term, i.e., *Om* (*Aum*), is also mentioned in verses 1-12 of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. However, according to Robert Ernest Hume⁸The first verse indicates that the said term denotes the past, present, and future within the very structure of the world. The three chief

⁷ S. Bhattacharji, *Literature in the Vedic Age* (Vol. 2, 1986, p. 123).

⁸ R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upaniṣads* (1921, pp. 391–393).

doctrines of non-dualistic philosophy—the nature of the Brahman, the nature and states of the soul, and the nature of the entire world—are expressed through these three syllables.

In short, according to its etymological meaning, the aforesaid three syllables represent the divine symbol of the universe. From the *Vedic* perspective, *Brahman* is described as the absolute, eternal, formless, and infinite — both immanent and transcendent — the ultimate reality beyond time, space, and causality. *Brahman* is the source and repository of all powers of creation, preservation, and dissolution in the universe.

Moreover, in the *Ṛg Veda-s*, *Prāṇa*⁹ (*ṚgVeda*; 3.53.21.) is the one central theme. It is also imprinted in the verse that

“*yaḥ sarvajñāḥ sarvavidyasyaiṣa mahimā bhuvī;
divyebrahmapure hyeṣa vyomnyātmā pratiṣṭhitaḥ
manomayaḥ prāṇāśarīranetā
pratiṣṭhito'nne hṛdayaṃ sannidhāya
tadvijñānena paripaśyanti dhīrā
ānandarūpamamṛtaṃ yad vibhāti .” Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad: 2.2.7*

Prāṇa is the vital breath, established in every chamber of the body, and is characterized by immortality, eternity, sublimity, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and subtlety by its very nature. The gross body, however, stands in complete contrast to the subtle body.

However, regarding the significance and nature of the *Prāṇa*, an emeritus Professor Sukumari Bhattacharji in her book entitled *Literature in the Vedic Age* in the second volume wrote that “*Prāṇa* is identified with Brahman by Kausitaki and Paingya”.¹⁰³ ‘In *prāṇa* is established the entire soul.’¹⁰⁴ ‘The gods live with *prāṇa* (as do) men and animals, *prāṇa* is the life of all creatures. Those who worship *prāṇa* as Brahman live the full span of their life.’¹⁰⁵ Thus we see that *prāṇa* does duty for Brahman in the period, and almost imperceptibly the mythological monotheistic hierophany is being supplanted by the physical principle *prāṇa*, which moves steadily towards its metaphysical counterpart, Brahman. Aitareya Aranyaka II: 3:2 finds *prāṇa* in trees, animals, and men in an ascending order and does not distinguish idealistically between body and mind in both of which *prāṇa*, the life principle, indwells, thus making both equally significant metaphysically. Clearly, *prāṇa* here anticipates the more abstract *ātman* of the Upanisads. Less divorced from the objective world than the Upanisads, the Aranyakas emphasize the supreme significance of the life principle. There is a gradual movement towards

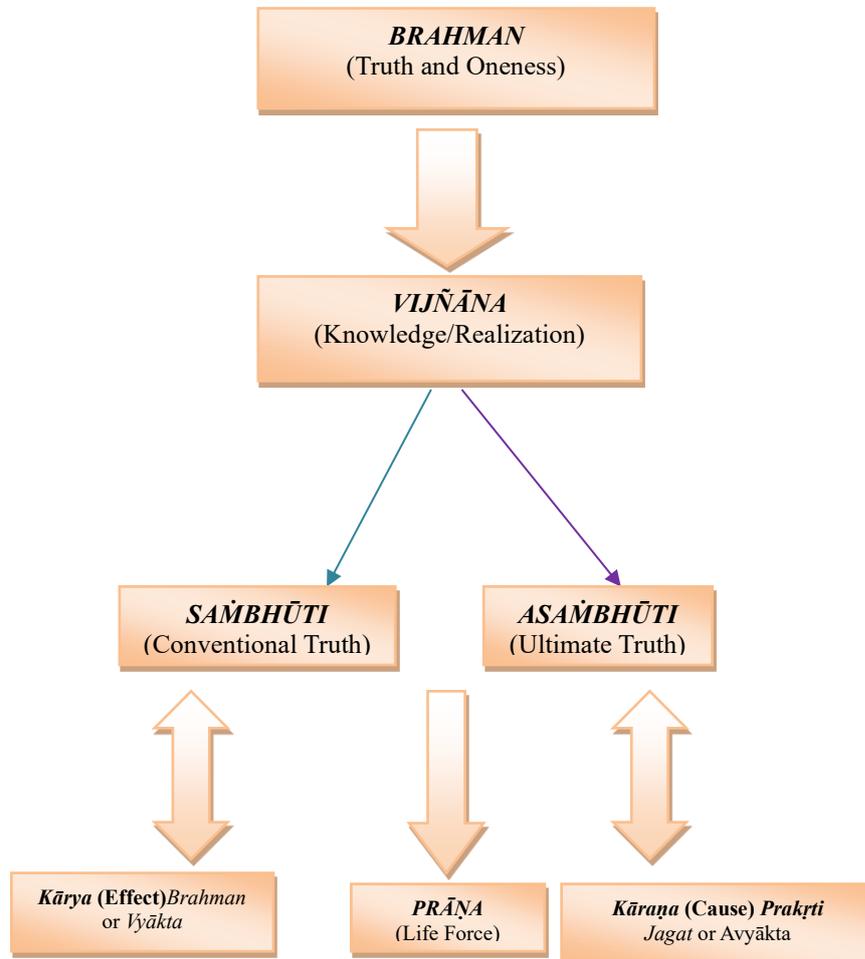
⁹ indrotibhir bahulābhir no adya yācchreṣṭhābhir maghavañ chūra jinvā.
yo no dveṣṭy adharāḥ sa spadīṣṭa yamu dviṣmas tamu prāṇo jahātu. *ṚgVeda*; 3.53.21

abstraction from the Brāhmaṇas through the Aranyakas to the Upaniṣads. Thus, we notice an equation: the sense organs: prāna: prāna: ātman.”¹⁰(Bhattacharji, 1986, 164-165).

From the said passage, *Prāṇa* is the life force — the vital energy and the fundamental principle of existence. It is often described as the breath or subtle energy that pervades and animates all living beings throughout the cosmos, sustaining balance and harmony.

Prāṇa and *Brahman* are the two sides of the same entity—the Universe. In this context, the entity is the Universe or *Brahman*. One side of this entity is *Prāṇa*, and the other side is *Brahman*. The possibility of assimilating both sides of the entity rests on two crucial points. The first crucial point is the ultimate, unchanging, and formless reality, which serves as the foundation for the union of *Brahman* and *Prāṇa*. The second crucial point is that both are dynamic and life-sustaining energies

Figure-1



Having completed delineating the basic endeavours of the first section of the paper, the next pivotal point will focus on the objective outlined in part two. The objectives outlined in Part

¹⁰ Bhattacharji, *Literature in the Vedic Age* (Vol. 2, 1986, pp. 164–165).

Two require explanation from the perspective of the *Upaniṣad(s)*. This part aims to present the thoughts of the *Upaniṣad(s)* regarding the term “*Vijñāna*” in relation to the nature of *Brahman*.

3. Etymological meaning of the Upaniṣada

The word *Upaniṣad(s)* is derived from the compound “*Upa–Ni–Sad*” with the suffix *Kip*. ‘*Upa*’ means “very near,” implying closeness to the *Sadguru*—the ideal or noble teacher. In the following stage of this article, the significance of the term “*Vijñāna*” will be examined based on the *Kena Upaniṣad*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, and *Vṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*.

3.1. Meaning and significance of Vijñāna

Vijñāna is one of the most important terms in the *Upaniṣad(s)* and *Indian Philosophy*. Many Indian philosophical schools have used this term to explain various concepts, but in the *Upaniṣad(s)*, it carries profound significance. It is often employed to denote the supreme or specific form of knowledge, and is closely associated with spiritual insight, wisdom, and self-realization.

The Sanskrit term *Vijñāna* is derived from the combination of two roots—*Vi* and *Jñāna*—each carrying a distinct meaning. In the *Pāli* canon, it appears as *viññāna*. The prefix “*vi*” means “particular,” “clear,” “definite,” or “distinctive,” while *jñāna* means “consciousness,” “wisdom,” “insight,” “knowledge,” or “intellectual understanding.” Etymologically, therefore, *Vijñāna* means “special knowledge” or a “higher form of knowledge.”

In essence, it refers to an elevated state of knowing that bridges intellectual understanding with experiential realization, uniting the *Ātman* (Self) with *Brahman* (Ultimate Reality).

3.2. Exploring Vijñāna in Kena Upaniṣad

In the *Kena Upaniṣad*, the term *Vijñāna* is used to explore the significance of the phrase “*avijñātaṃ vijñānātaṃ vijñātamvijñānataṃ*.”¹¹ (*Kena Upaniṣad*, II.3). The verse is addressed to the nature of *Brahman*.

This verse reveals the paradoxical nature of *Brahman*. Here are the two types of distinguish nature of *Brahman*. The types are ‘*avijñātaṃ*’ (Unknown) (*Kena Upaniṣad*, II.3) and

¹¹*Kena Upaniṣad*, II.3

Concept of Brahman as Vijñāna in the Light of Veda(s) and Upaniṣad(s)

‘vijñatam’(Known) (*Kena Upaniṣad*, II.3). It is a very interesting concept with regard to the *Brahman* nature that at the same time *Brahman* is to be described with the features of to be known and not yet to be known.

Basically, it has the opposite of being considered an object of knowledge or not an object of knowledge at the same time. These types of authoritative action cannot be found in the same object at the same time and on the same lines. The extract meanings of the part of the verse are: it is unknown to those who know it, and it is known to those who do not know it.

In other words, the thing has infinite qualities. If *Brahman* is considered to be a subject of a matter, then it follows that *Brahman* would have many more infinite qualities than the general things. It is concluded from the aforesaid verse that *Brahman* has two qualities. One quality is positive; another is negative. Positively, *Brahman* is the state of the agent of creation, the agent of preservation, and the agent of dissolution. Apart from this positivity, *Brahman* is to be known as the subject matter of negation.

The aforementioned statements in the verse are creating paradoxes. The actual reasons for the aforesaid paradox are that one thing cannot be true or false at the same time. Either the things will be true or false. If one thing can be formed as true or false at the same time, it will come under the rules of paradoxes. Here, the nature of *Brahman* comes beneath the rules of paradoxes due to its contradictory nature. At the same time, one and eternal *Brahman* has two contradictions. *Brahman* is subject to the matter of known and the matter of unknown. While a person accepts a thing, it is the means by which he is aware of the features of that thing.

The above paradoxes could be resolved. *Brahman* is subject to the matter of knowing. But the *Upaniṣad(s)* say that *Brahman*, the ultimate reality, cannot be "known" as an object in the usual sense. It means that, beyond the usual sense, it could be known more precisely. Apart from the usual sense, it could be known by the realisation. This realization is expressed in the terms of non-duality: the knower, the process of knowing, and the known merge into one indivisible reality.

3.3 Analysis of Vijñāna in KaṭhaUpaniṣad

Kaṭha Upaniṣad is one of the most important texts in the *Vedic literature*. *Vijñāna* has played a significant role in the context of the realization of knowledge and spirituality. The text is known for its teachings on the nature of the *Self* (*Ātman*), the nature of ultimate reality (*Brahman*), and the path to liberation (*Mokṣa*). This text has started with the conversation between the young boy *Nachiketa* and *Yama*.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*¹², *Vijñāna* has been used in the sense of higher esteemed post, which is designated as ‘*vijñānavān*’ (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*: 1.3.8). It is the meaning of the term ‘*vijñānavān*’ that an individual who has a sagacious mind and also has clear knowledge of what should be done and what should not be done. The passage says that no one should try to indulge the sagacious mind even in a hectic situation that arises. He will be well understood by maintaining the honesty of his deeds, and his mind has been incessantly free from dishonesty in every situation in this phenomenal world. He will be free from rebirth. Hence, he will thereafter attain a certain time at the stage of realization.

3.4 Exploring *Vijñāna* in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*

In the *Vedic literature*, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* is one of the most important texts, and the term *Vijñāna* has been used to denote the subject of knowledge of *Brahman*. The passage says that meditation is the most important means of serving the deities. Meditation would not be successful without the true knowledge of passages or mantras. For this purpose, *Vijñāna* is also known as *Brahman*. Hence, the word “*Vijñāna*” has been used for the meaning of the knowledge of the scripture—“*vijñānam sāstrārthaviṣayam jñānam.*”¹³ (Lokeswarananda 2014, 616).

3.5. Investigating *Vijñāna* in *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*

Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad is one of the most important texts and emphasizes the nature of *Brahman*, the realization of *Brahman*, and the concept of liberation. The term “*Vijñāna*” has been used to relate the true nature of *Brahman*.

These three passages, 1.2.12 (Lokeswarananda, 1994, p. 48), 2.2.7 (Lokeswarananda, 1994, p. 87), and 3.2.6 (Lokeswarananda, 1994, p. 127) have different senses. These are “*vijñānārtham,*”¹⁴ (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.2.12) “*vijñānena,*”¹⁵ (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*) and “*Vijñānamayaśca*” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 3.2.6). Each sense is profoundly significant.

¹²*yastu vijñānavānbhavati samanaskaḥ sadā śuciḥ .*

sa tu tatpadamāpnoti yasmādbhūyo na jāyate . 1.3.8 *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*

¹³ Lokeswarananda, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (2014, p. 616).

¹⁴“*parīkṣya lokānkarmacitānbrāhmaṇo nirvedamāyānnāstyakṛtaḥ kṛtena.*

tadvijñānārtham sa gurumevābhigacchetsamitpāṇiḥ śrotriyaṃ brahmaniṣṭham.” *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: 1.2.12.

¹⁵“*....tadvijñānena paripaśyanti dhūrā ānandarūpamamṛtaṃ yad vibhāti.*” *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: 2.2.7.

In the passage 1.2.12 (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 1.2.12), the term “vijñānārtham” is used, and in the passage 2.2.7 (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 2.2.7), the purpose of education about the scripture with the help of competent teachers is explicitly delineated.

In the passage 3.2.6 (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 3.2.6), it is understood that, through much more practice, the goal of the human soul is the realization of the Brahman as “vedāntavijñānasuniścītārthāḥ.”¹⁶ (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 3.2.6).

Thus, they do not enter the cycle of rebirth even after death due to the identical realization of the supreme soul. Hence, he will incessantly remain a consumer of eternal freedom.

3.6. The study of Vijñāna in Taittirīya Upaniṣad

Several aphorisms in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* are generally associated with the term *Vijñānam*. In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, *Vijñānam* plays a significant role in the teaching of *Brahman*, helping to unearth the concept of *self* and its interrelation with *Brahman* as *Vijñānam*. The term *Vijñānam* originated in the Second Chapter, namely Ananda Valli, fifth Anuvāka, and first aphorism of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.5.1). The verse, read as follows:

“vijñānam yajñam tanute; Karmāṇi tanute'pi ca; thes Vijñānam devāḥ sarve;
Brahma jyesthamupāsate; Vijñānam brahma cedveda; Tasmāccenna pramādyati;
Śarīre pāpmano hitvā; Sarvān kāmān samaśnute iti.”¹⁷

In this aphorism, the term is emphasized to denote *Vijñāna* as performing sacred duty (*Vijñānamyajñam*), *Vijñāna* as deities, *God*, or divine spirit (*Vijñānamdevāḥ*), and *Vijñāna* as the ultimate being, *Brahman* (*Vijñānam Brahma*). The super-conscious nature of *Vijñāna* is interconnected with everything in this cosmos.

In essence, the term “Vijñānam” is used three times in the said Upaniṣad, denoting the *Yajña*, the *Devā*, and, finally, *Brahman*, the first and only ultimate reality. Humans are inclined towards *Yajña* by the force of their auspicious intellect. Not only *Yajña*, but humans are also inclined towards all kinds of duties by the power of their auspicious intellect. All the deities, too, worship the supreme *Brahman* as a form of *Vijñāna*, which resides in the roots of auspicious intellect.

¹⁶ “vedāntavijñānasuniścītārthāḥ samnyāsayogādyatayaḥ śuddhasattvāḥ.
te brahmalokeṣu parāntakāle parāmṛtāḥ parimucyanti sarve.” *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: 2.2.7.

¹⁷ Lokeswarananda, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2024, p. 81).

The profound notion of the *Vijñāna* is also explicitly mentioned in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* as *Vijñānamaya-kośa*¹⁸—the pan-treasury of the higher consciousness, higher wisdom, higher insight, higher knowledge, or higher intellectual understanding. This aphorism appears to unleash the nature of the five types of sheaths in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. All four other *Kośa*, apart from *Vijñānamaya Kośa*, are contained within it.

Resultantly, if anyone knows Brahman as a form of *Vijñāna*, if the worshiper is always free from illusion or ignorance, and if one realizes that the material body is insignificant, then that person will not be bound by the fruits of action. Hence, he will always remain detached from this material body.

3.7. Examining *Vijñāna* in *Ṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*

Apart from the above *Upaniṣada(s)*, the *Ṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* has also been continued towards emphasizing the term “*Vijñāna*” with regard to unearthing the identical relation with Brahman in some verses of the *Upaniṣad(s)*.

Ṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5, read as follows:

“*sa hovāca: na vā are patyuh kāmāya patih priyo bhavati, ātmanastu kāmāya patih priyo bhavati | na vā are jāyāyai kāmāya jāyā priyā bhavati, ātmanastu kāmāya jāyā priyā bhavati | na vā are pūtrānām kāmāya putrāḥ priyā bhavanti, ātmanastu kāmāya putrāḥ priyā bhavanti | na vā are vittasya kāmāya vittam priyam bhavati, ātmanastu kāmāya vittam priyam bhavati | na vā are brahmaṇaḥ kāmāya brahma priyam bhavati, ātmanastu kāmāya brahma priyam bhavati | na vā are kṣatrasya kāmāya kṣatram priyam bhavati, ātmanastu kāmāya kṣatram priyam bhavati | na vā are lokānām kāmāya lokāḥ priyā bhavanti, ātmanastu kāmāya lokāḥ priyā bhavanti | na vā are devānām kāmāya devāḥ priyā bhavanti, ātmanastu kāmāya devāḥ priyā bhavanti | na vā are bhūtānām kāmāya bhūtāni priyāni bhavanti, ātmanastu kāmāya bhūtāni priyāni bhavanti | na vā are sarvasya kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati, ātmanastu kāmāya sarvam priyam bhavati | ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyo maitreyi, ātmano vā are darśanena śravaṇena matyā vijñānenedaṃ sarvam veditam.*”

¹⁸“*sa yaścāyam puruṣe; Yaścāsāvāditye; Sa ekah; Sa ya evamvit; Asmāllokātpretya; Etamannamaya-mātmānamupasamkrāmati; Etam prāṇamayam-ātmānamupasamkrāmati; Etam manomayamātmānamupasamkrāmati; Etam vijñānamayamātmāna-mupasamkrāmati; Etamānandamayamātmānamupasamkrānti; Tadapyeṣa śloko bhavati. Iti astamo'-nuvākah.*” *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.8.

In the aforesaid verse of the *Vṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, it reveals the meaning of “*Vijñāna*” and how to practice the *Śrvaṇ* (hearing), the *Manan* (Contemplation), and the *Nididhyāsana* (Meditation) towards achieving the science of self-realization.

Vṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.23, read as follows:

“*yo retasi tiṣṭhan retaso ’ntaraḥ, yaṃ reto na veda, yasya retaḥ śarīram, yo reto ’ntaro yamayati, eṣa ta ātmā ’ntaryāmyamṛtaḥ; adṛṣṭo draṣṭā, āsrutaḥ śrotā, amato mantā, avijñāto vijñātā; nānyo ’to ’sti draṣṭā, nānyo ’to ’sti śrotā, nānyo ’to ’sti mantā, nānyo ’to ’sti vijñāta, eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmyamṛtaḥ, ato ’nyadārtam; tato hoddālaka āruṇirupararāma.*”

In this aphorism, *Vijñānena* is used in lieu of *Vijñāna*. This term is now properly employed to denote the process of knowledge of Self-Consciousness. Pan-attractions and Pan-destructions of our life with regard to money, relation, society, etc., do not arise from our needs; they arise owing to the pan-interest of our *Self*.

Having delineated the content of the second section, the content of the third section will be presented. In this section, the notion of *Brahman* will be depicted using two aspects: one transcendental and the other empirical. Before understanding the definition of *Brahman* according to two approaches, it is essential to know what truly constitutes the transcendental and the empirical.

The significant difference between the transcendental and the empirical is that transcendental pertains to the study of what lies beyond the sensory organs and cannot be acquired through direct experience. In contrast, the empirical pertains to the study that is entirely distinct from the study of transcendental. In an empirical study, objects of the external world are known through the senses and other external organs, and knowledge of the material world is obtained through experience.

4. Transcendental and empirical aspects of Brahman

The doctrine of *Śaṅkarāchārya* is commonly known as *Kevalādvaitavāda*, or *Advaitavāda* or non-dualism, or absolute monism, whereas *Rāmānuja* and other schools of *Vedānta* systems subscribed to *Monotheism*. Says *Śaṅkarāchāryā*, *Brahman* is alone *true*, this world is *false*, and there are no differences between *Brahman* and *Jīva*.

The half of the verse stated above from the *Advaita Vedānta* is the main vow word. The vow word reveals that *Brahman* alone is *one* and *true*, the *world* is *false*, and *Jīva* is an inseparable

part of *Brahman*. Hence, it is extracted from the theory that there is no more than one and only one Reality that exists, that's *Brahman*.

From the transcendental standpoint, the concept of *Brahman* is described as an Infinite, eternal, *nirgūṇa*, *niskṛiya*, *nirvikāra*, *nirviśeṣa*, without even the smallest vestige, ever pure, full greatness, infinitely great being. Apart from these apparatuses, *Brahman* has explained through other characteristics, viz. Supreme, Sublime, and has been known to be through negative descriptions.

Here, the special iota shall be emphasizing with regard to the terms, i.e., '*eka*' and "*bhūmā*." *Brahman* is '*eka*'. The word '*eka*' refers to eternal oneness. In verse 6.2.1 of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, *Brahman* has been explained as '*ekamevādvitīyam*¹⁹' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*; 6.2.1.) and *Brahman* nature is also involved as '*bhūmā*²⁰' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*; 7.23.1.) in the verse 7.23.1.

To explain the term '*ekam*,' the *false world* is an ongoing part of the *Brahman*. The *false world* is ascribed as non-existent and one without a second. The *false world's* existence has been brought out from existence (*Sat*). The *Upaniṣad(s)* have unravelled that the *world* has manifested as a being of existence and one without a second. The 'existence' is defined as a state of being that incorporates a pure one without a second, all-pervasive one, which is formless and conscious beyond our thought and speech. In this regard, one instance is mentioned in the footnotes.²¹ (Lokeswarananda 2014, 488)

Brahman's Second significant feature, '*bhūmā*,' is associated with the transcendental apparatus of the *Vedānta* system. The term '*bhūmā*' is an inseparable aspect of *Brahman's* nature, representing happiness, vastness, and infinite being, as explicitly expressed in the phrases

¹⁹ *Sadeva somyedamagra āsīdekamevādvitīyam; Tad- dhika ahurasadevedamagra āsīdekamevādvitīyam tas-madasataḥ sajjayata. Chāndogya Upaniṣad; 6.2.1.*

²⁰ *Yo vai bhūmā tatsukham nalpe sukhamasti bhūmaiva sukham bhūmā tvevavijijñāsītavya iti bhūmānam bhagavo vijijñāsa iti. Iti trayovimśaḥ khandah. Chāndogya Upaniṣad; 7.23.1.*

²¹ In his book, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Swami Lokeswarananda says, "Vedānta says, suppose you are passing by a potter's house and you see him with a huge lump of clay. Then you return that same way a few hours later, and you are surprised to see that the nameless and formless lump of clay is transformed into a number of pots, plates, bowls, cups, etc.-each distinct with and a form. Similarly, existence becomes manifest as this world, but it remains existence." P. 488

Concept of Brahman as Vijñāna in the Light of Veda(s) and Upaniṣad(s)

"*sukham bhūmā*"²² (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*; 7.23.1) and "*nalpe sukhamasti*"²³ (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*; 7.23.1). '*Bhūmā*' is also used to denote infinity, adding depth and complexity to its meaning. Indeed, *Brahman* is an infinite being.

Now, the question is: What is infinity? Happiness is only in the infinite. The infinite, without limitations in terms of time and space, is the source of real joy, happiness, and peace. In contrast, the finite is a mere shadow of the infinite, devoid of the true source of happiness. Only after achieving the state of '*bhūmā*,' a state of profound understanding and realization, can one truly experience the highest form of happiness in this constrained life.

The features of *Brahman*, as stated just before, the infinite and the finite, are deeply explored in the *Vedānta Philosophy* from transcendental and empirical aspects. From an empirical standpoint, *Brahman* comes under all-pervasiveness, *sat-cit-ānanda*: Eternal existence, Eternal Consciousness, and Eternal Bliss, no external and internal differences, i.e., "*bheda(s)*" cannot be imposed. It is justifiable that according to *Śaṅkarāchārya*, *Brahman* has no kinds of differences. The differences are named in three forms: *Sajātiya*, *Vijātiya*, and *Svagata*. The first two differences come beneath the external "*bheda(s)*," and the remaining one is the internal "*bheda(s)*" of *Brahman*.

As stated above, the three types of "*bheda(s)*" are *sajātiya bheda(s)*, *vijātiyabheda(s)* and *svagata bheda(s)*. *Sajātiya bheda(s)* defines as the differences between the same kinds of objects. The differences between the different qualities of the two objects are called *vijātiya bheda(s)*. It is the internal "*bheda(s)*" of an object. It is called *svagata bheda(s)*. Similarly, according to *Śaṅkarāchārya*, *Brahman* has no external and internal differences. As per the *Śaṅkarāchārya*, external and internal differences cannot be imposed with esoteric and exoteric objects of *Brahman*.

The following questions are examined here in this regard. The questions are given below, accordingly:

- i. The first question is: Is it possible to search for the internal differences inside *Brahman*? If so, how?
- ii. The second question is: What exactly is the relation between the powers of the substance and its attributes and powers?²⁴ (Chaudhuri 2012, 18)

²² *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*; 7.23.1

²³ *Ibid*; 7.23.1

²⁴ Chaudhuri, *Ten Schools of the Vedānta* (Parts I–III, 2012, p. 18).

iii. The third question is: What exactly is the real relation between the parts and the whole of *Brahman* and between the attributes, powers, and substance of *Brahman*?²⁵ (Chaudhuri 2012, 18)

These three questions are sufficient to reveal the different relationships among the concepts mentioned earlier from the aforementioned aspects. The rules of Mathematical Algorithms do not solve these questions. The answer is: nothing can be searched inside the *Brahman*. The answer to such a question needs to be more specific but illogical. No one can unravel *Brahman*'s inner nature. Nay, if anybody wants to try unravelling the inside nature of *Brahman*, at last, they fall into the vortex of illusions. No person, in any manner, could find *Brahman*'s internal differences. As a result, it is an insoluble question or not substantial for the *Brahman*. So, the conclusion is that there is no difference inside the *Brahman*, according to *Śaṅkarāchāriya*.

Point out that the second and third questions should be considered here. The relation between the substance and its attributes and powers, as well as parts and the whole of *Brahman*, has been depicted in this way: Everyone is concerned that attributes and their power are inseparable matters of any substance or material entity. If anyone says *Brahman* is similar to substance, *Brahman* could have an inseparable relationship between its attributes and powers as parts and the whole.

Now, the question is: What are the attributes and powers of *Brahman*? Here, an eminent scholar named Rama Chaudhuri gives her opinion with regard to solving the paradoxes.²⁶ (Chaudhuri 2012, 18) Her opinion was that nothing can be found inside and outside objects of *Brahman*, and such questions are insoluble. Anybody can oppose her view by saying *Brahman* has infinite powers and attributes that are whole and part of this cosmos if *Brahman* is considered to be a speculative object. No one escaped his limitations. All are under his jurisdiction in this cosmos. The Man, the Self, and other living entities in this cosmos will be affected and reflected, or affection and reflection as the whole and part of the infinite *Brahman*. As characterized by the infinite *Brahman*, it has not accepted any *bheda(s)*. Swāmī Gambhirānanda, in his book entitled "*Brahmansūtra Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya*," mentioned that "The being inside is God, His

²⁵*Ibid*; P.18

²⁶ Rama Chaudhuri in his text entitled "*Ten schools of the Vedānta*" (Part I, II & III) wrote, "Thus, if there be parts inside a whole that will give rise to endless irremovable difficulties, unanswerable questions, and insoluble problems, from the logical and philosophical points of view" P.18.

qualities having been taught".²⁷ (Gambhirānanda 2021, 79) He mentioned God's qualities.²⁸ (Gambhirānanda 2021, 80-81) These qualities are incorporated into the *Brahmannature*.

The question of Paradoxes: Some paradoxes regarding *Brahman's* nature can be imposed from the transcendental and empirical standpoints. One can develop a paradox regarding the oneness of *Brahman's* nature. Thus, the Paradox can be formed: If oneness is *Brahman's* true nature, then how could it be possible for the *Soul*, the *World*, and all other entities to be derived and manifested from that one *Brahman*? *Brahman's* nature could be accused in such a way that it is acknowledged and meaningful; the oneness is reflected as many. The Paradox comes: *Brahman* is a transitory being. Because the transformation has occurred in many forms from one, however, it is established by the *Sankarācārya* that the properties of *Brahman* are immovable and unchanging forms. It seems that change could not be possible for things that belong to one's nature, but *Brahman* seems to be changeable if one reflects on manifold natures. In this regard, can change only be possible in *Brahman* as an exoteric or esoteric form?

Then the Next Paradox emerges in this way that if accepted, *truth* is deemed to be *Brahman's* nature. How could this *false* world originate from the true *Brahman*? The true effects produce the only true causes. If so, who made this false world? *Brahman* cannot make the false world since having its trueness. However, *Vedānta* acknowledges that the only true *Brahman* has created this *false world*, leading to the Paradox: How is this possible? Similarly, it can be said that an imperfect world could be formed from the perfect *Brahman*. Does the *false world* truly derive from the true nature of *Brahman*?

Furthermore, another paradox is: how could be the *world* formed with this diverse kinetic if *Brahman's* nature is imagined to be immovable and formless. Thus, the Paradox arises: How could *Jagat* and *Jīva* of the part of *Brahman* from the formless nature of *Brahman*? If so, how far is logical proof of *Brahman's* immovable, formless nature? Thus, many paradoxes may be

²⁷ Gambhirānanda, Swāmī. *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācār*. Advaita Ashrama. 2021 P.79

²⁸ "Why? Because his qualities are taught. For it is God's qualities that are taught here...the derivation of that name is shown as arising from the fact of remaining free from sin..." "He has the same name as the other One has" (Ch. I. vii. 5)... "That which is the Self beyond all sins"... "He (the Person in the eye) is the Ṛk-mantra, the Sāma-mantra... the three Vedas"... this becomes proper only if He is the Self of all...the absolute power of ruling over the worlds and desires...points to God...Therefore, God Himself is spoken of as residing within the eye and the sun." (pp. 80–81).

imposed against the *Brahman* nature. One can think these paradoxes create too much awkward situations for the *Vedāntin*. As a result, if so, it is a certainly consistent question: How far would it be possible to dispel the numbness of these kinds of paradoxes?

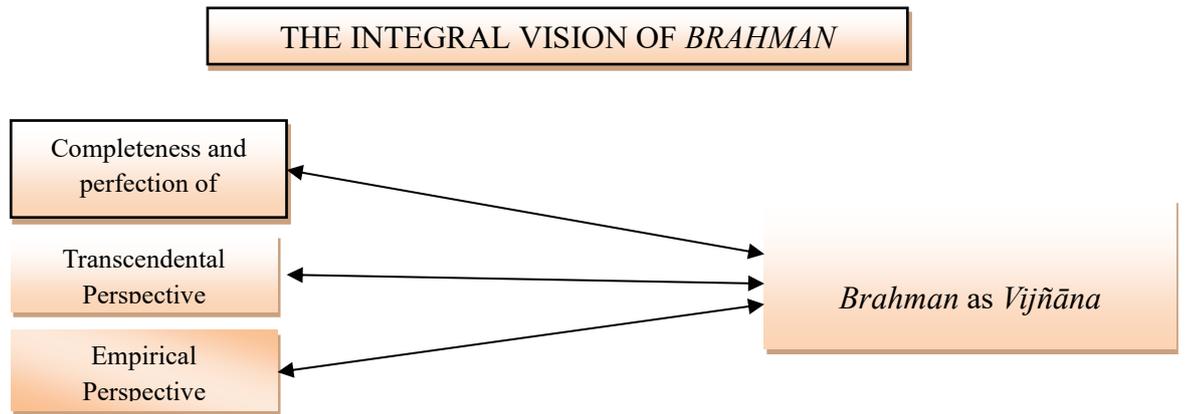
Reply to the paradox: Predominantly, the above-given paradoxes regarding *Brahman's* nature cannot be imposed from the empirical and transcendental aspects. First of all, from an empirical standpoint, the paradoxes shall be explained here. Western scholars and Philosophers are still looking for a better answer than the one in such a way. The answer is that these types of paradoxes cannot be applicable because of the false changes in this world that have been seen on account of the power of illusions. Transitory *Brahman* is impossible. Since *Brahman* alone is the material and efficient cause in this cosmos. For instance, *Brahman's* nature can be explained by using the examples of the clay lump, and the relationship between *Jīva* and *Brahman* is identical, as in the Pot and the Potter. The Lump of Clay is the material cause of the cosmos. All the clay utensils belong to the lump of clay. All the clay utensils, like Pots and the jug, are the many forms and names of the lump of clay. Here, the potter is the efficient cause of the lump of clay or clay utensils. The potter is the architect and shaper of clay utensils like pots or jugs.

By the way, the answers could have been more satisfying to Western scholars and philosophers. The answer is more sarcastic than realistic to Westerners. They seem Indian thinkers do not think proper way. The answer can be developed to depict the paradox from the transcendental standpoint. Thus, the way of replying shall be formed so that transformation can be possible and all beings belong to the times and climes.

In contrast, there is no possibility of significant change about not being constrained to space and time. *Brahman* is the subject to beyond space and time. *Brahman* exists forever. *Brahman* is the fundamental being of the cosmos. *Brahman* cannot be many in numbers owing to the direction of motion of the universe. The universe cannot be formed from manifold things. One is the fundamental concept of the source of the cosmos's origination.

As a result, the *Brahman's* nature manifested in many forms and names. However, this does not mean *Brahman's* nature would be transitory. *Brahman* is always formed and belongs to one, unchanged, immovable being. The change, therefore, cannot be formed in *Brahman* by means of the esoteric or exoteric aspects. *Brahman's* esoteric or exoteric changes are generally illusions. The subsequent stage shall depict the concepts of *Jīva* and *Jagat* in conformity with the earlier standpoints as explained by the *Brahman* concept.

Figure-2



5. Conclusion:

At the stage of epilogue, it may be stated that those who have realised the nature of *Brahman*—those who have attained the knowledge of self-consciousness—are the most eligible persons to acquire the knowledge of *Brahman* and the knowledge of self-consciousness. The true reason is that there are no other bases for attaining self-consciousness except by realising it directly. Hence, it is verily essential to understand Him beforehand; only thereafter does the knowledge of self-consciousness, or the knowledge of *Brahman*, naturally unfold. This realisation arises and flourishes within an infinite conscious experience that transcends the limitations of individual contemplation, concepts, and intellectual knowledge.

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