RATIONAL EPISTEMICS OF DIVINE REALITY LEADING TO MONISM

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This chapter aims to prove that the ultimate consequence of any rational epistemics of divine reality is monism or non-dualism. This is so because the rationality of reality implies unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and infinity as will be proved in this chapter, and therefore in order to make a rational sense out of reality, reason rejects all experience as an illusion. This will be proved through a study of Greek monism and *Advaintin* non-dualism. At the end, Kant's Phenomenalism will be studied to see how he attempts to solve the problem of the rationality of reality, though it will be shown that his epistemics only tends towards subjectivity, skepticism, and agnosticism. The study of each system will be followed by a critique, by the researcher, of the same at the end of each section.

'Rational epistemics of divine reality' may be defined as the study of the epistemic procedures of metaphysical theories on divine reality that regard reason as their chief source of knowledge. 'Reason' may be defined as the capacity for inference and rational thought. In common parlance, reason refers to that faculty of the human knowing process that ensures certainty, consistency, and purity in the field of knowledge. It can be distinguished from experience as the source of knowledge that does not require exhaustive sense-perceptions of all reality to verify it, but is verified as self-evident by reason itself. Since rational epistemics has reason as its basis it is referred to as being rational. In this chapter, the results of the rational attempts at the knowledge of God will be studied in order to see whether reason is a reliable source or guide of divine knowledge.

The Quest for Rational Certainty in Epistemology

Rationalism may be defined as the epistemic theory that holds that only knowledge derived or based on reason are certain. It believes in the existence of some *a priori* knowledge, i.e., knowledge that does not originate in sense experience, though it may find validation through it. These *a priori* truths are regarded to be real. Experience is considered to be unreliable as the senses are unreliable. The bent spoon in a glass of water, a mirage, and a motion picture based on the persistence of vision are all indicative that sense experience is not a reliable guide to truth. However, the laws of logic (like the law of non-contradiction that states that A=B ≠ A≠B) are doubtlessly held as axiomatic. In the same way, statements like 'every effect must have a cause' and 'every object occupies space' are considered to be axiomatic truths that are crucial to any rational analysis. It is only through reasoning based on some fundamental *a priori* truths that all truths are thought to be established.

The quest of reason for certainty in knowledge can be described as follows. Truth is expressed in statements. Statements are sentences that possess meaning. Statements of truth are those propositions that possess absolute meaning. *A priori* or rational truths have at least five

characteristics that distinguish them as rational truths; they are: unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and strict universality.

Unity refers to the identity, exclusivity, and non-ambiguity of truth. Truth is one. A rational truth is singular and exclusive. Thus, 2+2=4 means that 2+2=4 and not 2+2=5. In the same manner, 'All bodies are extended' expresses the predicate as contained in the subject; thus, identical and one.

To say that truth is a unity also means that it is subject to the law of non-contradiction. The law of non-contradiction states that it cannot be true both that a proposition is true and also that it is false; not both *p* and not-*p* (e.g., 'A rose cannot be not a rose').[1] This excludes all possibility of relativizing truth. Though truth is subjective (as it is subjective knowledge of objective reality) it is not arbitrarily decided. It is subjectively discovered not determined. Thus, if one holds something to be true (say, it is raining) which someone else doesn't hold to be true (say, it is not raining), then a contradiction is obvious and both of them cannot be true at the same time. Either one is true or the other is true; not both true at the same time. The law of non-contradiction itself is a self-validating truth. It cannot be falsified. Thus truth must be singular and exclusive in nature.

Another feature of rational truths is necessity. This differentiates them from empirical truths which are contingent. Rational truths cannot be thought as non-existent. For instance, 'All bodies occupy space' is discovered through experience, of course, but there can never be imagined a body that does not occupy space. Thus, 'body' and 'space' are rationally connected and the concept of space becomes necessary for the concept of body. In the same manner, it does of necessity follow that 2+2 = 4. Likewise, the laws of reason are necessary rational truths. They are necessary for any reasoning to occur. Without them no reasoning is possible.

Rational truths cannot be considered to be fluctuating as the material world is. Truth must be immutable in nature. For if truth is inconsistent and changeable, no statement of truth can be regarded to be absolute. Therefore, truth is unchangeable.

For rational truths to be immutable they must be beyond the fluctuating effects of time and matter. This is what is meant by the transcendence of truth. Rationalists do agree that rational truths are above and over empirical truths. Plato's world of ideas is one example of such transcendent conception of rational truths.

By strict universality is meant that rational truths are not conditioned by any location. Thus, 2+2 = 4 is true on earth and also on Pluto.

Thus, rational truth is basically understood as possessing the qualities of unity, necessity, eternity, universality,[2] immutability, and transcendence. It will be seen in this chapter that when knowledge about ultimate reality is sought through rational epistemics, all the above or most of

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[1] Hunnex, *Charts*, p. 4

[2] Alister E. McGrath, *The Making of Modern German Christology 1750-1990,* 2nd edn. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 31

the features of truth mentioned above are anticipated as features of ultimate reality itself in some way or the other. This, the researcher, contends to be what the rational epistemics of divine reality is all about. The absolute nature of truth is projected on to reality itself. Thus, whatever one calls God to be, this world or a wholly other being, God is posited as One (unity), Self-existent (necessity), Immutable, Spirit (transcendence), and Infinite (universality). This chapter aims to uncover this nature of rational epistemics in the theories of the leading rationalists.

Rationalism can be found in the thoughts of several philosophers in both the Western and Eastern tradition. However, its full fledged development as a modern methodology was realized in the thought of the seventeenth century French philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes (1596-1650),[3] who proposed that certainty in philosophy can be achieved in the same way as in mathematics through the skeptical rational method. Exactitude and indubitability were goals that Descartes desired to achieve in the field of knowledge. Descartes' argument for the existence of God is a classic example of the modernist (rationalist) attempt to arrive at a rational certainty in theology.

Among the various rationalists are notably Plato (ca. 428-348 B.C.), Saint Augustine (354-430), Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677), Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz (1646-1716), and George Hegel (1770-1831).[4]

The Conflict of Reason and Reality in Rational Epistemics

At face value, the striking dissimilarities between *a priori* knowledge and *a posteriori* knowledge are evident. Unity, necessity, transcendence, immutability, and strict universality are characteristic of all truths given *a priori*. Conversely, plurality (diversity), contingency, immanence, change, and temporality are characteristic of all objects perceive *a posteriori.* Therefore, the quest of the rationalists has been to find a unified, necessary, transcendent, immutable, and universal ground of all diverse, contingent, immanent, changing, and temporal reality. The word 'universe' as such describes the philosophical search for unity in diversity; the whole reality as conceived of as somehow essentially one.

The Eleatic School. The Eleatic school of philosophy, deriving its name from the Greek city of Elea, in southern Italy, the home of Parmenides (c. 500 B.C.) and Zeno, the leading exponents of the school, flourished in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Many of the Eleatic doctrines are based upon the teachings of Xenophanes, though the systematization of them into metaphysics was done by Parmenides.[5] Parmenides taught that the world as it appears to us is an illusion. In truth, there is neither movement of objects nor the objects themselves in their diversity. Reality is not known to the senses but is to be found only in reason. Reality or True Being neither comes into nor goes out of existence. It is eternal, indivisible, and unchanging. The theories of both

[3] "Rationalism," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)
[4] Velasquez, *Philosophy*, p. 289
[5] "Eleatic School," *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* (Microsoft Corporation, 2001)

Pythagoras and Heraclitus are, thus, annulled; and in Parmenides, the Grecian quest for unity in diversity reaches its rational apex.

Regarding the nature of this singular reality, the following arguments are presented by Parmenides:

Argument from Change

1. To think of change requires thinking of something in terms of what it is not.
2. But reality, or being, is what it is and not something else.
3. Therefore, it is impossible to think of change in any clear way since the only thing one can think about is being, or what actually is.[6]

To think that being changes, one has to also think of it in terms of something it is not (something changes when it becomes something different from what it is in the present); and something other than being is non-being. However, it is impossible to think of non-being (to think of non-being means to think of nothing). Therefore, it is impossible to think of change in any clear way. Thus, this argument proves the non-rationality of empirical mutability. However, it is a weak argument since it only proves that no essential change can take place in the nature of being but doesn't show why that being cannot change in relation to something else. For instance, to say that water becomes ice doesn't mean that water and ice differ in the essentiality of being, but as different in relation to form: liquid or solid.

Argument from Coming-into-being

1. For something to arise out of non-being and come into being, non-being must be something, which it is not; therefore to say that something comes into being out of non-being is absurd.
2. To say that something arises out of being means that it already is. Therefore, there cannot be a coming-into-being out of being.[7]
3. Therefore, reality or being can neither be considered to have come out of non-being nor out of being. If it is not, it cannot be; if it is then, it cannot become.

This argument is based on the assumption that something cannot come out of nothing. Therefore, being can only come out of non-being if non-being were something, but non-being is nothing; and since something cannot come out of nothing, it is absurd to suppose that being came out of non-being. However, to say that being came into being out of being is to suppose that being is already in existence before it comes into being, which is contradictory and impossible. Therefore, it is also absurd to suppose that being came out of being.

The above argument is based on the assumption that being is one. So, if all being is one, it must have either always been or could not ever be; anyway, it could not be self-generated. This rational necessity of being is inescapable. Since being is, therefore, it cannot have been

[6] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, p. 16
[7] *Ibid,* pp. 16, 17

generated. This argument, however, fails to see the difference between necessary being and contingent being, as Classical Christian theology sees. Only the Divine exists as a necessary eternal being. All other is contingent upon the Divine and created by Him. It must be admitted, however, that this Christian notion of created contingency is not a rational achievement but a revealed doctrine. The fact of the matter is that rational philosophy can only admit and "see" that something cannot proceed out of nothing. Even Aristotle's Prime Mover can only be a mover with respect to a universe that already is; it does not create the universe out of nothing and then moves them.[8] In Will Durant's words, "God does not create, but he moves, the world…"[9]

Thus, it has been seen that the Ionian philosophers had searched for unity in diversity, for a permanent reality underlying change. Heraclitus, however, concluded that change itself was the only thing that was permanent. According to him, the search for a permanent material substratum is profitless. But, then, Parmenides came and denied even the reality of change. Change, according to Parmenides was impossible. Whenever change is thought about, the result is incoherent.[10] Further, Parmenides has argued that reality or being is one, permanent, ungenerated, indestructible, and unchanging. The rational search for ultimate reality thus ended in monism.

To the attacks of the pluralists, Zeno of Elea, disciple of Parmenides offered several arguments in form of paradoxes that demonstrated the utter absurdity of commonsense realism. Since absurdity is a sign of falsity, it is false that reality is many. Hence, Zeno argues that reality must be one. It may be noted that the paradox may also mean, contrary to Zeno's contention, that reason is false and experience is true. However, since it is difficult to label reason as false without the use of reason itself, the certainty of rational reality looms over that of experience. Few of Zeno's most famous proofs are as follows:

The Paradoxes of Plurality

The Argument from Denseness

> If there are many, they must be as many as they are and neither more nor less than that. But if they are as many as they are, they would be limited. If there are many, things that are are unlimited. For there are always others between the things that are, and again others between those, and so the things that are are unlimited.[11]

The paradox is that things appear to be as many as they are, that is as limited, whereas rationally speaking they must be unlimited; a pair of two is separated by a third, which pairing with its next is separated by a fourth, and so on *ad infinitum.* Thus, the view that reality is many, or numbered plurality, involves a rational impossibility.

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[8] Justin D. Kaplan (ed.), *The Pocket Aristotle*, pp. 138, 148, 155 (See 5. Aristotle's Observations, below)
[9] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p.71
[10] "Parmenides: Stage 1," http://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/parm1.htm
[11] Simplicius as cited in "Zeno's Paradoxes," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/

The assumption is that it takes something to separate an other. That means that if the 'separator' theory is abandoned the paradox doesn't exist. Why can't it be said that the things are separated by the void? In that sense, the void (meaning nothing) could rationally not separate anything; for to be separated by nothing is not to be separated at all. However, if empirically understood, the void (space) separates things in the sense that in between things there is the void. Thus, the rational-empirical paradoxical situation is not resolved but heightened by the different meanings of void by reason and experience. The paradox, consequently exists because the rational (immaterial) is applied to the empirical (material) and the fusion creates an either/or situation in which experience is ultimately dismissed as illusion.

The Argument from Finite Size

> … if it should be added to something else that exists, it would not make it any bigger. For if it were of no size and was added, it cannot increase in size. And so it follows immediately that what is added is nothing. But if when it is subtracted, the other thing is no smaller, nor is it increased when it is added, clearly the thing being added or subtracted is nothing.
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> But if it exists, each thing must have some size and thickness, and part of it must be apart from the rest. And the same reasoning holds concerning the part that is in front. For that too will have size and part of it will be in front. Now it is the same thing to say this once and to keep saying it forever. For no such part of it will be last, nor will there be one part not related to another. Therefore, if there are many things, they must be both small and large; so small as not to have size, but so large as to be unlimited.[12]

The first part of the argument which purports to show that if there are many things they cannot possess size is missing. The second part shows that if they do not possess size they are nothing. The third part shows that if reality is plural and, thus, composed of different parts, the following paradox results: Each part is divided into a front and a rear part. Each front and the rear part have a front and a rear part of their own respectively, and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus, the size would be zero and unlimited, which is paradoxical.

The Argument from Complete Divisibility

1. If a line segment is composed of a multiplicity of points, then the line segment is infinitely divisible; that is to say an infinite number of bisections can be made in it. One cannot come to a point where further bisection of the line segment is not mathematically possible. No singular point can thus be found. Therefore, a line segment is not composed of a multiplicity of points.
2. The line, which is made up of points, has a particular measurement (just as many points as it is and nothing more) and so is limited. It is a definite number, and a definite number is a finite or limited number. However, since the line is infinitely divisible, it is also

[12] *Ibid.*

> unlimited. Therefore, it's contradictory to suppose a line is composed of a multiplicity of points.[13]

Speaking thus, then, the existence of plurality is rationally impossible. For, according to each of the above the paradox of the limited and unlimited can be seen. Rationally speaking, things, if not one but many, involve infinity by divisibility. However, they must of necessity be limited in order to be numbered as many. Thus, the phenomenal experience is proved to be rationally untenable.

The Paradoxes of Motion

The Dichotomy

> The first asserts the non-existence of motion on the ground that that which is in locomotion must arrive at the half-way stage before it arrives at the goal.[14]

Suppose a runner is standing at point A and must reach point B in order to finish the race. The only way he can reach point B is by reaching the halfway point, say A_1, between A and B, before reaching B. But then the only way he can reach halfway point A_1 is by reaching the halfway point, say A_2, between A and A_1, and so on *ad infinitum* in order to finish the course. Thus in order for the runner to reach point B, he will have to traverse an infinite number of points in a finite time, which is impossible. Therefore, motion is absurd.

Achilles and the Tortoise

Suppose Achilles and a tortoise begin a race. Achilles allows the tortoise to have the head start since he is confident that the slow tortoise will never win the race. But now in order for Achilles to get past by the tortoise, he will first have to reach the point left behind by tortoise; but by that time the tortoise would have already gone by farther from the point, and so on *ad infinitum*. In other words, if A_1 is the point where the tortoise is presently and Achilles has to reach this point before he can overtake the tortoise, by the time Achilles would have got to point A_1 the tortoise would have gone a bit away and be at point A_2 which would then become the next point which Achilles would have to reach in order to overtake the tortoise, but by the time he gets to A_2 the tortoise would have gone a bit more farther, and so on *ad infinitum*. In this way, logically Achilles can never overtake the tortoise. But empirically Achilles is seen to overtake the tortoise, and therein lies the paradox. Empirically Achilles overtakes the tortoise but logically he cannot. And since overtaking the tortoise is seen as logically absurd, it cannot be true.

The Arrow

Consider an apparently flying arrow, in any instant. At any given moment, the arrow occupies a particular position in space equal to its length. But for an arrow to occupy a position in space equal to its length means that it is at rest. However, since the arrow must always occupy such a

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[13] "Zeno of Elea," http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/z/zenoelea.htm

[14] Aristotle as cited in "Zeno's Paradoxes," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/paradox-zeno/

position in space equal to its length, the arrow must be at rest at all moments. Moreover, since space as quantity is infinitely divisible, the flying arrow occupies an infinite number of these positions of rest. But the sum of an infinite number of these positions of rest is not a motion. Therefore, the arrow is never in motion. The absurd conclusion would then be that the flying arrow is ever at rest, which is impossible. Therefore, motion is false.

Thus, the phenomenal world of empirical plurality is shown to be false. The main parts of the arguments of Parmenides and Zeno are summarized as follows:

1. Being cannot arise out of non-being, for then it would have to be even before it arises out of non-being; therefore, being is eternal and ungenerated.[15]
2. Being is indivisible, for it cannot divide itself from itself.
3. Being is one and not many, for if it were many it would have to be diversely differentiated by something other than being, namely non-being, which means to be differentiated by nothing.
4. Being cannot be falsified; for if spoken of, it must be; if not spoken of, then nothing is spoken of. If being is not, then nothing is.
5. Being is indestructible, for change cannot be predicated of it, it being absolute.
6. The phenomenon of plurality is absurd, for it involves the paradox of the limited and the unlimited in the one divisible unit.
7. The phenomenon of change is absurd, for it involves completion of an infinite series in a finite time, as Zeno's paradoxes show.

Thus, reality is one, eternal, indestructible, immutable, and thus, absolute.

Implications for Divine Existence

Either of the following implications results from the supposition that being is eternal and singular:

1. God is being and the only one reality; all plurality of selves is an illusion.
2. God as an ontological distinct does not exist, for reality is one.
3. God is not, only being is; if the individual definitions of 'God' and 'being' are to be retained and not confused.

However, though Parmenides and Zeno have attempted to solve the ontological problem of the nature of reality, they have left the cosmological problem of the same unanswered. If reality is one, what accounts for the plurality that is manifest; or why does or how did reality come to appear as many? To this Parmenides and Zeno remain silent, and since a theory that doesn't take into consideration the whole avenue of the subject in question cannot be considered to be complete and unified, attention must be turned to the Indian philosophers to see whether they have a rational answer to this cosmological question. Nevertheless, this far the contradictions between reason and experience have been aptly demonstrated by the Grecians. And the

[15] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre*, pp. 16, 17

culmination of their rational search in the Eleatics was anticipated; for if reason alone is trustworthy, then experience must be dispensed with, as Zeno clearly showed.

Critique

Finally, as seen earlier, the rational search has been chiefly driven by the characteristics that define reason itself; hence, the results are seen to be of the nature of the same. As was seen earlier, *A priori* or rational truths have at least five characteristics that distinguish them as rational truths; they are: unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and strict universality. In accordance, the rational search has revealed that reality is a unity (one); it necessarily exists (cannot be thought of not to exist), is immutable (motionless, changeless), transcendent (that is, this world being an illusion, reality cannot be this world), and finally strict universality meaning that reality is indivisible and contiguous to itself. Thus, the rational results have only been a mirror of reason itself.

Now, attention must be turned to the rationalists among the Indian philosophers to see how they explain the unity and plurality of the universe.

The *Advaitin* Search for Unity in Diversity

Advaita philosophy is deeply religious and epistemologically based. The chief problem is ignorance and the way to ultimate liberation is by realization of Truth. *Advaita* means non-dual and refers to the doctrine that reality is ultimately non-dual in nature and all plurality and diversity manifest in nature is only illusory. Liberation consists in the dissolution of the knower-known duality. To quote from the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad:

> Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something, one speaks something, one thinks something, one knows something. (But) when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one see and through what, what should one hear and through what, what should one speak and through what, what should one think and through what, what should one know and through what? Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known – through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the Knower?[16]

The doctrine of *advaita* (non-dualism) has its origin in the Upanishads though the systematization of it was eventually done by Shankaracharya (788-820 A.D.), a Brahmin from Kerala and disciple of Gaudapada whose *Karika* (expository treatise) on the Mandukya Upanishad contains the roots of *advaita siddhanta* (doctrine of non-dualism).

Of the many Upanishads that exist (over 108), the Mundakya Upanishad is considered to best embody the doctrine of non-dualism. In only twelve mantras, it is thought as have packed into a nutshell all the wisdom of the Upanishads.[17] Together with the Gaudapada Karika and

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[16] *The Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, II.iv.14 (trans. Swami Madhavananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1997), p. 259

[17] Swami Krishnananda, *The Mandukya Upanishad* (Rishikesh: The Divine Life Society, 1996), p. 7

Shankara's commentary on it, it forms a powerful argument for the inevitability of non-dual reality. In this research, the Mandukya Upanishad with Gaudapada's Karika and Shankara's commentary will be chiefly studied to find the rational epistemics inherent in their conception of reality as non-dual.

While for the Greeks physical reality was a major concern, for the Indians conscious reality was the major concern. While the Greeks tried to find what the unifying basis of all physical reality was as such, the Indians wanted to find what the unifying basis of all conscious reality was as such. The Greeks began from physics and proceeded on to metaphysics. The Indians began from the self, from consciousness, and proceeded on to metaphysics. The Greeks tried to analyze the known in order to understand the known. The Indian analyzed the knower in order to understand the known. Thus, the Indian quest for ultimate reality can be described as a search for a psychological basis of the universe.

This has several implications:

1. In the search for the external, one begins with the attempt to first understand the internal, viz. consciousness.
2. Before knowing what is out there, one begins with the attempt to first understand why knowing even exists.
3. If consciousness as one experiences it is false, then all quest no matter how scientific it appears will be wrong headed. But if consciousness as one experiences it is true, then the quest can end up in truth.
4. The problem is not why something exists, but why something such as consciousness exists. The knower is thus the starting point.
5. Liberation, thus, becomes noetic; knowledge of the Truth brings salvation.
6. No wonder, then, in advaita the Brahman is called Sat-chit-ananda, meaning Being-Consciousness-Bliss, with pure consciousness as the essence of being and bliss; bliss being that condition of being as consciousness in which no distraction or strife by virtue of duality exists.

The words "Brahman," "Self," "Reality," "Lord," "God," and "Consciousness," in the personal noun form refer to the Absolute and Ultimate Reality, Brahman. Following, then, is a brief exposition of the rational method employed in the search for reality as contained in the Mandukya Upanishad[18], and Gaudapada's Karika and Shankara's Commentary on it:

Argument from Dream

1. Objects perceived in a dream are false since they cannot be located in finite body (II.1, 2).
2. Objects perceived in the dream and the waking states, being common in the sense of both being perceived, are similar and, therefore, one (II.4, 5).

[18] *Mandukya Upanishad, with the Karika of Gaudapada and the Commentary of Sankaracarya* (trans. Swami Gambhirananda; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995).

3. Therefore, objects perceived in the waking states are as false as objects perceived in the dream state.

This argument is reminiscent of the old Chinese philosopher's question: If I dreamed I was a butterfly and awoke to find myself a man, how do I know whether I was a man who dreamed I was a butterfly or was a butterfly dreaming I am a man? The above argument of Gaudapada may be reinstated in the following manner:

1. Since consciousness is one, its perception must be consistent.
2. To say that objects in dream are false but objects in the waking state are real is to say that consciousness is inconsistent in perceiving things.
3. But if consciousness is inconsistent, then truth cannot be known for certain.
4. Since the objects in dream are obviously false from the standpoint of the waking state, it must be inferred that the objects in the waking state are false from another standpoint, and so on, in order that consistency of consciousness be maintained.
5. The standpoints cannot be infinite; therefore a final condition of consciousness must exist.
6. In the final analysis, it must, for the sake of consistency, be maintained that the objects of both the dream and waking states are false.
7. Therefore, the objects of both the dream and waking states are false and phenomenal plurality as it appears is unreal.

The dream and waking states point to subjective idealism. Though the objects of the dream and waking states can be denied reality, reality cannot be denied to consciousness itself. Thus, consciousness itself is the substratum to the objects of perception. And consciousness is non-different from the experiencer as Shankara explains:

> The creatures visible to a waking man are non-different from his consciousness, since they are perceived through consciousness, just like the creatures perceived by the consciousness of a dreamer. And that consciousness, again, engaged in the perception of creatures, is non-different from the experiencer, since it is perceived by the experiencer, like the consciousness in the dream state.[19]

Thus, Consciousness alone is the only reality and plurality of objects is super-imposed on it.

Gaudapada's dismissal of the phenomenal reality of waking state on the basis of his dismissal of the phenomenal reality of the dream state might be unjustified extrapolation, in the sense of certainty of knowledge. For by his argument only a probability emerges: this phenomenal reality of the waking state *might probably be* as unreal from another state of consciousness as the phenomenal reality of the dream state is unreal to the waking state. But how does one know whether or not the waking state is the rock-bottom state of consciousness? On what basis is another higher state of consciousness assumed? Gaudapada doesn't give a clear answer,

[19] Comment on Karika IV. 65-66, *Mandukya Upanisad,* p. 209

demonstrating the hypothesis-drive of his reasoning. Faith seems to form a strong basis for the rationality of Gaudapada.

Argument from Immortality of Soul (III. 19-22; IV. 7-10)

This is an argument directed at those believers in rebirth who vouch for the immortality of the soul. It demonstrates that if the soul is immortal it cannot undergo mortality.

1. A thing can never change in its nature (as fire cannot change its heat).
2. The soul is immortal by nature.
3. Therefore, the soul can never become mortal, i.e., it can never pass into birth.

By the word 'nature' Gaudapada means 'that which is permanently acquired (*samsiddiki*), or is intrinsic (*svabhaviki*), instinctive (*sahaja*), non-produced (*akrita*), or unchanging in character (*svabhavam na jahati ya*).'[20] With this definition in view, he writes: "All souls are intrinsically (*svabhavatah,* by nature) free from old age and death."[21] Consequently, saying that a soul becomes mortal by birth is to say that the soul becomes the opposite of itself in nature by birth, which is a contradiction in terms, seeing that the soul was first called immortal by nature and nature was defined as that which is *permanently* acquired. Therefore, if the soul is immortal it cannot become mortal in anyway. Thus, those who believe in the immortality of soul cannot rationally also sustain the theory that the phenomenon of birth and death is true. Hence, phenomenal events cannot be true.

Thus, this argument is meant to demonstrate that the phenomenon of birth and its accompanying doctrine of rebirth are rationally inconsistent with the doctrine of the immortality of soul. With reference to the doctrine of rebirth and creation, Gaudapada says: 'Instruction about creation has been imparted by the wise for the sake of those who, from the facts of experience and adequate behaviour, vouch for the existence of substantiality, and who are ever afraid of the birthless entity.'[22]

Contrary to the supposition that souls become mortal at birth, which forms the core of the doctrine that Gaudapada attacks, there is also the belief that the soul never becomes mortal at birth; rather it is embodied at birth and gives up the body at death. Thus, the birth or mortality of body doesn't affect the soul.[23] In that case, the phenomenon of birth and decay cannot be dismissed. However, this belief presently doesn't seem to be the concern of Gaudapada.

Argument from Coming to Being (IV. 4)

1. A thing that already exists does not pass into birth (for it already is).
2. A thing that does not pre-exist cannot pass into birth (for something cannot come out of nothing).

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[20] IV. 9, *Ibid,* p. 162
[21] IV. 10, *Ibid,* p. 163
[22] IV. 41, *Ibid*, p. 192; the statement has overtones also of the permissiveness of myth for the common folk.
[23] *Srimad Bhagvad-Gita* II. 20-23 (tr. Swami Vireswarananda; Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974), pp. 38, 39

3. Therefore, there is no birth.

This argument, similar to Parmenides' argument from coming-into-being, has in perspective not just the material universe but also being as consciousness and arrives at the conclusion by negation of two opposing views held by two different schools Indian philosophy, *viz.* the Sankhya and the Nyaya.

The Sankhya held that 'something cannot come out of nothing; and whatever is, has always been.'[24] Birth is the manifestation of what is already in a latent form. Objects do not come to be; they already are. The Nyaya, on the other hand, held to the doctrine of non-existent effect, which taught that the effect, once non-existent, comes into being afterwards. In other words, something comes out of nothing.[25]

Gaudapada negates both the views by stating that neither the pre-existent nor the non-existent can pass into birth. However, since birth of objects is perceived empirically, phenomenal experience must be false. Thus, both the Sankhya and Nyaya by opposing each other in their views prove that non-dualism is true.

Argument from Disintegration (IV. 11)

1. The only way the cause can take birth is by (at least partial) disintegration of itself.
2. But nothing that disintegrates can be eternal.
3. Therefore, if the cause disintegrates, then it cannot be eternal.
4. But the cause is eternal.
5. Therefore, it cannot disintegrate; i.e., it does not take birth.

This argument is based on the empirical notion that whatever disintegrates cannot be eternal. For instance, a jar that is disintegrable is not eternal. For it will soon be reduced to nothing by disintegration. Or it at least has the potential to disintegrate, which implies that it is not eternal necessarily, or in the absolute sense. Therefore, if the cause were to be eternal it must not disintegrate. Thus, the doctrine of birth is nullified.

Together with the argument from coming to being, this argument is a strong case for non-dualism. If something cannot come out of nothing, then something must be eternal. If this something is eternal then the phenomenal world is unreal; for eternality evinces birthlessness and non-disintegration. Since the cause must be eternal, therefore the phenomenal world is unreal.

However, the argument loses if it is proven that this eternal cause can create a contingent world out of nothing. But this is rationally difficult since reason lacks any synthetic (empirically demonstrable) way by which it can be proven that something can be created by someone out of nothing. The only cases where such creation out of thin air is seen are in magic or the conjurer's

[24] M. Hiriyanna, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 273
[25] *Ibid*, p. 239

trick. But the result of such creation is illusory and unreal and proof of the doctrine of non-dualism which states that phenomenon is illusory or unreal.

On the final analysis, everything can be doubted but consciousness cannot be doubted. And if consciousness exists, it must be eternal; for it cannot come into existence either by itself or by something else. Further on, since the soul is birthless, reincarnation and birth is false. External objects share in similarity with internal objects of dream and therefore do not exist; thus, the phenomenal world is unreal from the standpoint of ultimate reality even as the dream world is unreal from the standpoint of phenomenal reality. If the phenomenal world were true then, there could be nothing eternal and cessation of the world would have occurred already as is written: "It is beyond question that the phenomenal world (*prapancah*) would cease to be if it had any existence…" (I. 18). Obviously, since temporality and transitoriness is characteristic of the world in which birth and death of things is the only empirical fact. As such, then, there could be nothing eternal. But perhaps it may be said that phenomenal reality is created by a transcendent absolute reality in the sense that both are equally real.

But phenomenal reality cannot be causally related to absolute reality: If the cause is birthless then the effect must be birthless which is contradictory; if cause and effect are simultaneous then causal relation does not exist meaning the cause did not cause the effect, which is contradictory; if the effect and cause are mutually causative then, the father-son contradiction results. Thus, phenomenal reality cannot be the product of an uncaused cause. If it is not the product of creation then, of course, implicitly, all change, motion, and birth lacks an ultimate causal relation. Therefore, the phenomenal world has no real existence. Thus, from the absolute standpoint, only Consciousness or the Self is Reality.

> Everything seems to be born because of the empirical outlook; therefore there is nothing that is eternal. From the standpoint of Reality, everything is the birthless Self; therefore there is no such thing as annihilation.[26]

Thus, only "Consciousness – birthless, motionless and non-material, as well as tranquil and non-dual"[27] exists. In the final analysis, by the way, both birth and birthlessness are categories that cannot be applied to Ultimate Reality (IV. 60, 74). However, if consciousness is non-dual, and phenomenal reality is unreal, then what accounts for the experience of duality or plurality in the world? To this the following explanation is given:

Analogy of the Firebrand

1. As the firebrand appears to be straight or crooked when in movement, so does Consciousness[28] appear to be the knower and the known when in vibration (IV. 47).
2. As the firebrand, when not in motion, becomes free from appearances and birth, so Consciousness, when not in vibration, will be free from appearances and birth (IV. 48).

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[26] Karika IV. 57, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 204
[27] Karika IV. 45, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 195
[28] The word 'Consciousness' with capital 'C' here refers to Brahman, the Absolute Reality.

3. The appearances of the firebrand in motion are not externally caused. Neither do they come from anywhere else nor do they go anywhere else from it (since appearances are not things and so lack substantiality); likewise, when Consciousness is in vibration, the appearances do not come to It from anywhere else, nor do they go anywhere else from It when It is at rest. Appearances lack substantiality and therefore are unreal (IV. 49-52).
4. In this way the external entities (appearances) are not the products of Consciousness; neither is Consciousness a product of external entities. Thus, the knowers confirm the non-existence of cause and effect (IV. 54). Consciousness is, thus, objectless and eternally without relations (IV. 72).
5. As in dream Consciousness vibrates as though having dual functions, so in the waking state Consciousness vibrates as though with two facets as subject and object (IV. 61, 62).

The firebrand, thus, in its vibrant condition illustrates how qualitative, quantitative, and relational appearances occur when Consciousness is in motion. However, the illustration does not answer as to what accounts for Consciousness to be in motion, to which the following answer is given:

The Hypothesis of Maya

Even as objects appear to be real by magic, so do objects appear to be real through *Maya* (IV. 58, 59).

1. In the same manner that magic is not an object that exists; Maya also is not an object that exists (IV. 58, 59).
2. As a creature conjured up by magic (Yatha mayamayo jeevo) undergoes birth and death, so also do all creatures appear and disappear (IV. 69).
3. The birthless Self becomes differentiated verily through Maya, and it does so in no other way than this. For should It become multiple in reality, the immortal will undergo mortality (III. 19). That is, the contradiction of "immortal is mortal" (A≠A) occurs.
4. The imagination that a plurality of objects exists is the Maya (delusion) of the Self by which it itself is deluded (II. 19).
5. Maya is not a reality in the sense that it exists separately of Brahman, but is only descriptive of the condition of self-delusion that Brahman experiences (IV. 58). If Maya were existent then non-duality would be false since the second is already imagined. If it were non-existent then the experience of duality could not be explained. Consequently, neither existence nor non-existence can be predicated of it. Attempts to call it as existent produces the error similar to calling delusion as a power that exists in the condition "the man is deluded." Accordingly, the phrase "by the power of Its own Maya" (II. 12) may be re-phrased as "by self-delusion".

Thus, vibration of Consciousness gives rise to the experience of diversity, which is *Maya* or delusion. In other words, the whole condition of vibration and phenomenal experience is *Maya*. The implications are clear: if the Self or Brahman can be self-deluded then It cannot be perfect. As O. N. Krishnan says, "If He is subject to delusion, then He cannot be considered omniscient

and omnipotent."[29] However, omniscience and omnipotence are attributes that are inapplicable to the non-dual Self. Therefore, it is wrong to talk of the Self as lacking or possessing any such attributes. As Shankara puts it:

> …the Self, in Its own reality, is not an object of any other means of knowledge; for the Self is free from all adventitious attributes. Nor…does It belong to any class; because, by virtue of Its being one without a second, It is free from generic and specific attributes…. It is devoid of all action. Nor is It possessed of qualities like blueness etc., It being free from qualities. Therefore It baffles all verbal description.[30]

Another point which O. N. Krishnan makes against the *Maya* theory is that since Brahman by being deluded is the source of all evil in the world, while at the same time the law of *Karma* operates to administer justice in the world, how can it be logically conceived that the same deluded Brahman is the source of evils and injustices and at the same time dispenser of justice?[31] To which it may be replied that both *Karma* and rebirth are unreal from the standpoint of Ultimate Reality. In other words, they appear to be so only by *Maya*; as Gaudapada says: "Birth of a thing that (already) exists can reasonably be possible only through Maya and not in reality."[32] Ultimately, if all is non-dual, what is that causes evil to what and what is that judges what? Further, being free of relational attributes such as "justice," "goodness," etc. do not apply to Brahman.

The process of *Maya* is described by the Karika as follows:[33]

1. First the Lord (Brahman) imagines the individual (soul).
2. Then He imagines the different objects, external and mental.
3. The individual gets his memory in accordance with the kind of thought-impressions he has.
4. The Self is, consequently, imagined to be the many.
5. This is the Maya of that self-effulgent One, by which He Himself is deluded.

Regarding the relation of the individual souls with the Absolute Brahman, the following explanation drawn from an analogy of jars and space is given:

The Analogy of Jars and Space (III. 3-8)

1. Just as space confined within the jars etc. merge completely on the disintegration of he jars etc., so do the individual souls merge here in the Self (III. 4).
2. Just as all the spaces confined within the various jars are not darkened when one of the spaces thus confined becomes contaminated by dust, smoke, etc., so also is the case with all the individuals in the matter of being affected by happiness etc. (III. 6).

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[29] O. N. Krishnan, *In Search of Reality,* p. 343
[30] *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 32
[31] O. N. Krishnan, *In Search of Reality,* p. 343
[32] III. 27, *Mandukya Upanisad*, p. 134
[33] II. 16-19, *Mandukya Upanisad,* pp. 74-77

3. As the space within a jar is neither a transformation nor a part of space (as such), so an individual being is never a transformation nor a part of the supreme Self (III. 7).
4. Just as the sky becomes blackened by dust etc. to the ignorant, so also the Self becomes tarnished by impurities to the unwise (III. 8).
5. The aggregates (of bodies and senses) are all projected like dream by the Maya of the Self (atma-maya-visarjitah, i.e., Self's deluded-projection). Be it a question of superiority or equality of all, there is no logical ground to prove their existence (III. 10).

In accordance with (3) above, it is erroneous to suppose that an individual being is a transformation of the Self. For if that was true, then when an individual realized Brahman, cosmic liberation would have simultaneously occurred. Similarly, it is erroneous to suppose that the individual is a part of the Brahman, as if Brahman were a divisible whole. For if Brahman were divisible, then in accordance to the argument from disintegration it would not be eternal. However, if it were not eternal, then it could not be, in accordance to the argument from coming-into-being. Thus, Brahman is the eternal, unchanging, formless, partless, birthless, sleepless, dreamless, tranquil and fearless, non-dual Self (III. 36, 37).

Critique of Non-Dualism and the Theory of Maya

The rational mirror has been clean over *advaita*. Consequently, the five characteristics of rationality, *viz.* unity, necessity, immutability, transcendence, and strict universality are readily reflected in the concept of Brahman. Brahman is non-dual (unity), Real (necessity), unchangeable and birthless (immutability), non-phenomenal (transcendence), and all-pervasive[34] (strict universality).

Obviously, the non-dualistic enterprise, though thoroughly rational, is not freed from a *kind of fideism*. This is so in the sense that the non-dualistic enterprise itself begins from the hypothesis that all reality is one, Being is one. Logically, then, when the cosmological argument is applied to it, this Being turns out to be the uncaused one. The argument from necessity and contingency necessitates Being to be necessary. Similarly, other arguments prove that this Being is immutable, undividable, and infinite. Thus, the hypothesis that all Being is one facilitates reason towards this conclusion of non-dualism. However, it is also inevitable that reason assumes this worldly reality to be the only reality and, thus all being to be one. On what basis, could it assume some other kind of existence to which these rational attributes could be applied? Experience, of course, doesn't provide it with any such ideas. And, apart from Revelation, reason is certainly driven upon this hypothesis, *viz.,* that this worldly reality is all reality available for analysis, towards non-dualism. But immediately the problem to explain away phenomenal reality, the plural and dynamic one, as false emerges and non-dualists come up with the hypothesis of *Maya* to ward off this problem.

However, the theory of *Maya* does bear some difficulties. If *Maya* is nothing other than the deluded condition of the Self then, as to how Consciousness gets vibrant is not explained. If *Maya* is intrinsic to the nature of the Self, then the Self cannot be attributeless; further, since

[34] Karika I. 10, *Mandukya Upanisad,* p. 40

delusive power is intrinsic to It, truth can never be a sure possibility. Besides, since the individuals are neither transformations nor parts of the Self, the Self is untouched by what happens to the individuals, which are but dream-like from the absolute standpoint. Then, how can it be said that the delusion occurs to the Self if bondage or liberation of the individual does not affect It in anyway?

Moreover, the vibration of *Maya* theory does not make it clear how and why self-delusion results in plurality of appearances. Dream objects though unreal have similarity with objects of the waking state, thus admittedly arisen from the experience of the waking state (IV. 37). But objects of the waking state cannot be so related to the other states of consciousness. For in both *Prajna* and *Turiya* these objects cease to be. In the analogy of the rope and snake, wherein the rope is falsely perceived as a snake in the dark, past experience with snake may account for the illusion; however, in the experience of plurality how can non-duality account for the same?

Furthermore, the Karika's assertion that *Maya* has no reality (IV.58) does pose problem. For if *Maya* has no reality then how can it have a delusive influence over the Self? But then, on the other hand, non-dualism does have a problem in its opposite, for if *Maya* did have any reality then, non-dualism would cease in face of the dualism of Self and *Maya*. To avoid this contradiction, *Maya* is said to be non-existing,[35] which only means that it does not exist. In that case, the rational conclusion must be that it, as being nothing, can affect nothing on the Self. It cannot even be said that 'self-delusion' is non-existent and still mean that *Maya* is operative. Obviously, reason has come to a standpoint, even in *Advaita* philosophy where it fails to reconcile reason and experience. Thus, the question of what accounts for phenomenal experience is not satisfactorily answered. And so, it may be said that though the rationalist attempt had been successful in deducing the non-duality, transcendence, immutability, necessity, and infinity of the Absolute, it has not been successful in providing a theory that accounts for the experience of plurality in the universe. Thus, the rationalist attempt fails to harmonize itself with experience.

In both the Grecian and the *advaitin* search, it has been observed that the resultant theology has been a reflection of the characteristics of reason. The culmination of the rational search has been monism or non-dualism. The result was inevitable from the deductions reached in the reasoning process. Proceeding from certain assumptions and having arrived at certain conclusions by reasoning, the derivation of a monistic outlook was only a necessary outcome. The most important of the findings in the rational path to monism were:

1. The logical impossibility of something coming out of nothing. Lacking any empirical concept of something coming out of nothing, it only becomes inevitable to assume that something cannot come out of nothing. Further, something coming out of nothing in the sense of self-generation is logically absurd.
2. The logical impossibility of change, either in relation to space or time. Consequently, motion, birth, and transformation are absurd.
3. Uncertainty of phenomenal reality from analysis of the states of consciousness.

[35] Karika IV. 58, *Mandukya Upanisad,* p. 205

4. Infinite conceptual divisibility leads to the paradoxical deduction that objects are essentially both finite and infinite. From our point of view, they appear finite but by virtue of being infinitely divisible, they are infinite within themselves.
5. The phenomenon of disintegration is not in keeping with the rational necessity of the universe being eternal (since it cannot come out of nothing). If it is eternal, then it cannot disintegrate. Thus, the phenomenal world cannot be true.

In the final analysis, it is necessity, eternality, and immutability necessitated of reality and the conviction that all being is one and indivisible that leads to the conclusion that reality is non-dual and contiguous (universal).

The next section in this chapter studies the epistemological theory of Immanuel Kant (A.D. 1724-1804) in order to analyze his thought regarding the epistemic difficulties and problems involved in any attempt to unravel the mystery of Ultimate Reality.

Kantian Epistemics and Divine Reality

Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) theory of knowledge is often referred to as the Copernican revolution in knowledge. According to Kant himself, as Copernicus hypothesized that the earth revolved around the sun rather than the sun revolving around the earth in order to solve the discrepancies in astronomy, it is also proper to hypothesize that objects conform to the faculty of intuition rather than the faculty of intuition conforming to the objects.[36] Though Kant insists that all knowledge begins with experience, he must be regarded as a rationalist and not an empiricist since he claims the mind to be actively involved in the production of ideas based on some innate ideas it already has in possession. The resultant knowledge of the world that one has is nothing but the product of the mind, which arbitrarily decides what the sensations must look like. Thus, knowledge is primarily rational (it resembles the mental structure).

Kant's *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) has two main divisions: the Transcendental Aesthetic, the Transcendental Logic. Transcendental Logic is further divided into Transcendental Analytic and Transcendental Dialectic. Both transcendental aesthetic and transcendental logic are the subjects of transcendental philosophy which Kant defines as the study of inherent structure of the mind, or the innate laws of thought.[37] It is a philosophy of the purely and merely speculative reason.

Kant defines 'transcendental aesthetic' as the science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility.[38] The science of transcendental aesthetic shows that there are two pure forms of sensible intuition, serving as principles of *a priori* knowledge, namely, space and time.[39] Space and time are not objective but subjective conditions for the apprehension of all things. In other words, all things are conceived as being in space and time and nothing can be conceived as being apart from them.

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[36] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. Norman Kemp Smith; http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ppp/cpr/toc.html, 1985), p. 22
[37] Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, p. 267
[38] *The Critique of Pure Reason,* p. 66
[39] *Ibid*, p. 67

One can conceive the gradual disintegration and vanishing of a thing in space but cannot conceive the vanishing of space itself. Thus, transcendental aesthetic shows the *a priori* existence of space and time as the pure forms of intuition. Furthermore, transcendental aesthetic cannot contain more than these two elements, namely space and time.[40] It is the *a priori* subjectivity of these forms of intuition that make possible the definite outworking of arithmetic and geometry; so that it is not necessary for one to go and experiment in all parts of the universe in order to establish the rules of geometry. The forms of intuition, *viz.* space and time, provide the framework with reference to which universally applicable geometrical rules can be drawn.

In his section on transcendental analytic, Kant lists twelve *a priori* categories or pure concepts of understanding in accordance to which reality is known. The understanding applies the pure concepts or categories to all influx of data and arranges them in order so as to facilitate knowledge. Consequentially, 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.'[41] And further on, 'The understanding can intuit nothing, the senses can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise.'[42] The categories are: *of quantity*: unity, plurality, totality; *of quality:* reality, negation, limitation; *of relation*: of inherence and subsistence, of causality and dependence, of community (reciprocity between agent and patient); and *of modality*: possibility - impossibility, existence - non-existence, necessity – contingency.[43]

Kant argues that one cannot know reality as it is or a thing-in-itself; what can be known is only thing-as-it-appears-to-us. The thing-in-itself is what Kant calls *noumenal* reality; while the world as we experience it is termed *phenomenal* reality. Since reality as it is cannot be known Kantianism becomes another form of moderate epistemic agnosticism. What is known to us including the space and time that we experience is nothing but the creation of the mind in active participation with the influx of sensations that it unifies and synthesizes in accordance to the categories of thought in the framework of time and space.

Proceeding from here Kant attempts to explain the cause of metaphysical paradoxes in his section on transcendental dialectic. The metaphysical problem of psychology, cosmology, and theology arises mainly from a confusion of the categories of thought and forms of intuition with reality and the attempt to transcend the horizons of the understanding demarcated by the *a priori* forms and concepts. This misapplying of speculative reason beyond the bounds of possible experience lands one in antinomies of pure reason which are mutually contradictory ideas of metaphysics.

The antinomies are divided into classes of thesis and antithesis. While the thesis states one transcendental idea, the antithesis states its opposite transcendental idea which surmounts to an antinomy. The first antinomy is of space and time. The thesis is that 'the world has a beginning in time, and is also limited as regards space.' This thesis is a rationally anticipated one since a beginningless world would imply the completion of an infinite succession of moments in the past before reaching the present, which is a sheer impossibility.[44]

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[40] *Ibid,* pp. 81, 82
[41] *Ibid,* p. 93
[42] *Ibid,* p. 93
[43] *Ibid,* p. 113
[44] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. Norman K. Smith), p. 397

On the other hand, the antithesis "the world has no beginning, and no limits in space; it is infinite as both regards space and time" is also not without rational proof. For if the world had a beginning, it could only have that beginning in time, preceding which a moment of time and so on several succession of moments *ad infinitum* exist. Secondly, to treat space as a limited container would assume the existence of another space in which this container exists and so on *ad infinitum*. Therefore, space and time cannot be finite but are infinite. [45] This antinomy is solved once one realizes that both space and time have no absolute reality beyond us. Space is 'no object but only the form of possible objects, it cannot be regarded as something absolute in itself that determines the existence of things.'[46]

The thesis of the second antinomy of atomism states that 'Every composite substance in the world is made up of simple parts, and nothing anywhere exists save the simple or what is composed of the simple.'[47] If substance were not made up of simple parts then in the final analysis nothing would remain; that is to say that there would not even be any substance. For in order that the substance have definite existence, it should ultimately be made up of parts that cannot further be broken down. However, the antithesis states that 'No composite thing in the world is made up of simple parts, and there nowhere exists in the world anything simple.'[48] For the space that a substance or its so called simple parts occupies is not made up of simple constituents but of spaces, and anything that occupies space is, in concept, infinitely divisible; therefore, there nowhere exists in the world anything simple.[49] This antinomy again is the result of attributing external reality to space.

The third antinomy, of freedom, states its thesis as 'Causality in accordance with laws of nature is not the only causality from which the appearances of the world can one and all be derived. To explain these appearances it is necessary to assume that there is also another causality, that of freedom.'[50] An infinite series of cause and effect would be the alternative for a world without freedom. But an infinite series cannot land one in the present. There an uncaused factor, *viz.* freedom, must be conceded in order to explain the cosmos. However, the antithesis states that 'There is no freedom; everything in the world takes place solely in accordance with laws of nature.' For causality is anticipated as the reason behind every event in the world. It is a law of nature. And all nature is subject to this law. The only way transcendental power of freedom can be had is by being outside the cosmos. It is never permissible to attribute such power to substances in the world itself.[51]

The fourth antinomy is of God. According to the thesis, 'There belongs to the world, either as its part or as its cause, a being that is absolutely necessary.'[52] Since the phenomenal world contains a series of changes and every change is a necessary effect of a cause which itself is a necessary effect of another cause and so on, it follows that something that is absolutely necessary must exist if change exists as its consequence. And this necessary thing cannot be apart from this

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[45] *Ibid*, pp. 397-398
[46] *Ibid*, pp. 399a-400a
[47] *Ibid*, p. 402
[48] *Ibid*, p. 402a
[49] *Ibid*, p. 403a
[50] *Ibid,* p. 409
[51] *Ibid,* p. 413a
[52] *Ibid,* p. 415

world but either part of it or cause of it. For it can only effect in time and not beyond time, and since time belongs to the world of sense, the phenomenal world, this absolute necessary cause belongs to the world of sense. On the other hand, the antithesis states that 'An absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world, nor does it exist outside the world as its cause.' This is inevitable since the concept of an uncaused cause is contrary to the dynamical law of the determination of all phenomena in time. Further, it can also not be said that the series itself is absolutely necessary and unconditioned though contingent and conditioned in its parts; for the whole cannot be necessary if its parts are contingent. However, if it were supposed that the uncaused cause was apart of the world, even then it is assumed that in causing the effect it begins to act, thus belonging to time and the sum total of phenomena, that is the world. Therefore, an absolutely necessary being nowhere exists in the world, nor does it exist outside the world as its cause. This antinomy is also caused by a confusion of the forms of intuition and the categories of thought with reality. Neither space and time nor causality and community exist absolutely external to the knower but only as subjective constituents of the mind. Any attempt to transcend the bounds of the mind leads to antinomies as specified above.

Implications for Divine Epistemics

Kant resolutely argues that the traditional arguments for the existence of God, *viz.* the ontological, the cosmological, and the physico-theological (teleological) arguments are based on false premises. They proceed from the false assumption that quantity, quality, relation, and modality are inherent in the universe and not merely subjective to the knower alone. The arguments against the arguments for the existence of God are as follows:

a. The Ontological Argument: The ontological argument of St. Anselm (1033-1109) proceeded from the assumption that God was 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived.' However, if this God did not exist then everything conceived of would be greater than the conception of God for reality is greater than an idea. Therefore, God as 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' must of necessity exist. Rene Descartes had his own form of the ontological argument in which he argued that since God is by definition the supremely perfect being, He cannot lack existence, for that would mean that He was not a supremely perfect being; and since existence is a necessary attribute of perfection, God exists necessarily.[53]

Kant argues that though the inference from contingent existence to necessary existence is correct and unavoidable, the conditions of the understanding refuse to aid us in forming any conception of such a being.[54] Thus, the ontological argument is correct as far as words are concerned; but when it comes to actually forming a concept of the absolute and necessary being the argument fails. Further, the argument rests on judgments alone and cannot thereby alone establish the reality of anything. In Kant's own words: 'the unconditioned necessity of judgments is not the same as an absolute necessity of things.'[55] Alluding to Descartes' analogy of the triangle[56] Kant writes that though to posit a triangle and yet reject its three angles would be self-contradictory, there is no contradiction in rejecting the triangle with its three angles together. To put it the other

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[53] "Ontological Arguments," *Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ontological-arguments)

[54] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn; internet edition)

[55] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. N. K. Smith), p. 501

[56] That as the three angles are integral to the conception of a triangle, existence is integral to the conception of perfection.

way, if suppose in the analytical statement, 'all bachelors are unmarried men' the subject 'bachelors' implied the predicate 'unmarried men,' it still does not conclusively prove that there really are unmarried men or bachelors in the world. The statement is just a verbal one and is not corroborated by empirical evidence. In the same manner, though the subject 'the supremely perfect being' implies the predicate 'has existence as an attribute,' yet it does not conclusively prove that there really is a supremely perfect being in accordance to the words.[57] One can reject both the subject and predicate and still commit no contradiction. In addition, all existential propositions (that declare the existence or non-existence of the subject) are synthetic and not analytic and, therefore, the rejection of the predicated would never be a contradiction:[58] 'all bachelors are unmarried men' is not the same as 'all bachelors exist.' On the other hand if existence was to be considered as an attribute of anything, it is clear that this could not be true since an attribute adds to something and thus modifies it, but to say that something *is* does not really add anything to it. 'The small word "is" adds no new predicate, but only serves to posit the predicate *in its relation* to the subject.' [59] Therefore, existence cannot be an attribute. Even grammatically, it is understood that the words 'is' and 'exists' are not adjectives but verbs.

However, even more difficult is the attribution of existence to an idea having *a priori* and not *a posteriori* status. Kant says:

> Whatever, therefore, and however much, our concept of an object may contain, we must go outside it, if we are to ascribe existence to the object. In the case of objects of the senses, this takes place through their connection with some one of our perceptions, in accordance with empirical laws. But in dealing with objects of pure thought, we have no means whatsoever of knowing their existence, since it would have to be known in a completely *a priori* manner. Our consciousness of all existence (whether immediately through perception, or mediately through inferences which connect something with perception) belongs exclusively to the unity of experience; any[alleged] existence outside this field, while not indeed such as we can declare to be absolutely impossible, is of the nature of an assumption which we can never be in a position to justify.[60]

Thus, since the idea of God as a perfect being cannot be empirically justified, it is impossible to certify whether such a perfect being exists or not in reality. Here it may seem that Kant is leaning towards empiricism, but it must be noted that he is only saying that necessity and strict universality can only be applied to that which is *a priori* and, thus, to the forms of intuition and the categories of thought alone. To extend these to anything beyond these is to go beyond justification. One can be sure that the statement 'every cause has an effect' is true since causality itself is a category of the mind and cannot be thought off. However, the same cannot be said of the existence God or any other being in the world. The distinction between the *a priori* constituents of the mind and the *a posteriori* world of senses once understood, the ontological argument cannot stand any longer. Thus, the ontological argument is dismissed.

b. The Cosmological Argument: As stated by Kant himself the cosmological argument runs as follows: If anything exists, an absolutely necessary being must also exist. Now I, at least, exist.

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[57] "supremely perfect being" are just words and have no accompanying conception.
[58] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. N. K. Smith), p. 504
[59] *Ibid*, p. 505
[60] *Ibid,* p. 506

Therefore, an absolutely necessary being exists.[61] Since an infinite series of contingent causal relations is impossible an uncaused, unconditioned, necessary cause must be posited as the cause of the universe. However, Kant reasons that this argument too, as the former one, attempts to prove the existence of the transcendent from the empirical, which is impossible. If God were a link or beginning of the series then He could not be separated from it and thus also conditioned by causality. However, on the other hand if it were argued that He is separate from the series, there remains no way reason can find to span the gap between pure and contingent existence.[62] Nothing beyond the world of senses can be definitely known to us. This argument is epistemically flawed since it misapplies the transcendental principle of causality beyond the bounds of the phenomenal world. In Kant's own words:

> This principle is applicable only in the sensible world; outside that world it has no meaning whatsoever. For the mere intellectual concept of the contingent cannot give rise to any synthetic proposition, such as that of causality. The principle of causality has no meaning and no criterion for its application save only in the sensible world. But in the cosmological proof it is precisely in order to enable us to advance beyond the sensible world that it is employed.[63]

The chief error of both the ontological and the cosmological arguments is that of projecting the subjective transcendental principles on to reality. Thus, infinity and causality are misconstrued as physical or external conditions of reality while in reality they are concepts of the mind by means of which objective reality is subjectively apprehended. Moreover, one cannot attribute necessity to anything in the phenomenal world, as the cosmological argument does in its inference of the necessity of an uncaused cause, since necessity is a formal condition of thought found in our reason and not applicable to external reality. In the words of Kant, 'The concept of necessity is only to be found in our reason, as a formal condition of thought; it does not allow of being hypostatised as a material condition of existence.'[64]

c. The Teleological Argument: This is the argument that infers the existence of God from the order and purposiveness apparent in the universe. Kant, however, objects to this by saying that the utmost this argument can do is show that there must be a great architect who designed this universe.[65] Whether this architect is the supreme uncaused cause of the universe can only be established by recourse to the cosmological argument which has already been shown to be methodically flawed. The cosmological argument in turn rests on the ontological proof which itself proceeds from the error of mistaking a synthetic judgment for an analytical one as has already been shown. Thus, Kant nullifies all the three classical arguments for the existence of God. The conclusion is that God cannot be known by means of reason alone; neither can He be known on the basis of experience. Consequently, natural theology is not epistemically valid. Thus, speculative reason fails to prove or even disprove the existence of God. It has no means to relate to that concept.

However, though one cannot prove the existence of God, one can at least by means of practical reason and the knowledge of moral obligation postulate the existence of God as 'the grounds for

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[61] *Ibid,* p. 508
[62] *Ibid,* p. 519
[63] *Ibid,* p. 511
[64] *Ibid,* p. 518
[65] *Ibid,* p. 522

the necessary connection between virtue and happiness.'[66] On the basis of an *a priori* knowledge of what is, *viz.* the existence of moral laws, one can proceed on to know *a priori* what ought to be, *viz.* the existence of a supreme being 'as the condition of the possibility of *their* obligatory power.'[67] This postulation, however, is by use of not theoretical reason related to what is but by use of practical reason related to what ought to be; for if there were no being behind the moral laws, the moral laws would lack any obligatory power. However, there is still no way in which one can theoretically see the connection between the phenomenal world as is known and the transcendent Supreme Being God. Consequently, moral theology's flawless ideal of God as postulated by practical reason needs the aid of transcendental theology dealing with transcendental ideas to know transcendent divine reality. In Kant's own words:

> If, then, there should be a moral theology that can make good this deficiency, transcendental theology, which before was problematic only, will prove itself indispensable in determining the concept of this supreme being and in constantly testing reason, which is so often deceived by sensibility, and which is frequently out of harmony with its own ideas. Necessity, infinity, unity, existence outside the world (and not as world-soul), eternity as free from conditions of time, omnipresence as free from conditions of space, omnipotence, etc. are purely transcendental predicates, and for this reason the purified concepts of them, which every theology finds so indispensable, are only to be obtained from transcendental theology.[68]

However, there is no way these transcendent predicates can be proved to be the attributes of God. Evidently, reason is imprisoned in its own forms and concepts and has no way to go beyond itself to know anything about the external world except its own analysis of the sensations. This can, inevitably, lead to some kind of solipsism. Kant was at least sure that the self as the transcendental unity of apperception ('I think') exists and is that which perceives, recollects, retains, and knows. He was also assured about the objective reality of the noumenal world as the source of the sensations that the mind decodes by means of its own concepts thus giving rise to phenomena. However, since whatever is known is conditioned by the categories of the mind, a transcendental knowledge of the divine by means of these conditional categories becomes impossible. None of the classical arguments succeed in proving the existence of God since they involve a leap from the concepts of contingency to necessity and causality to non-causality without any intermediary concept to bridge the gap between any of them. This is anything but being rational.

Critique of Kant

The distinction between *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge that between analytical and synthetic judgments once established, Kant easily proceeded to show that the quality of *a priori* did not just belong to analytical judgments but to some synthetic judgments too. Since these synthetic judgments like '2+2=4', 'Every effect has a cause', and 'Bodies occupy space' contained, according to Kant, predicates not contained in the subject, they meant added information; in other words the possession of knowledge *a priori*. According to Kant, then, these *a priori* data formed the conditions according to which all other empirical data were interpreted and understood by the mind. The world as one sees or perceives as a result is nothing but what

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[66] Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1988), p. 319
[67] *The Critique of Pure Reason* (trans. N.K. Smith), pp. 526-527
[68] *Ibid*, p. 531

the mind determines it to look as. Space and time are not objective realities but subjective forms of intuition in which all data is arranged by the mind. Thus, the mind is not able to conceive of anything apart from space and time.

But what if space is not a form of intuition but a mere negation of objects? According to this view then, space would mean nothing. Consequently, once one knows what something is, then its negation becomes readily evident. This doesn't require any *a priori* knowledge of the negation equaling a synthetic judgment. The negation, in accordance to the rational principle of the exclusive middle, is of analytical nature. Once it is known that A=A and not non-A it immediately follows that something is either A or non-A. In the same manner, once through experience something is known, its negation, namely, nothing also is known.

It can, consequently, be postulated that space is the negation of substance, of reality, of being; thus, space is nothing, unreality, non-being. Consequently, one does not see things *in* space but things alone and their negation, *viz.,* space. Things do not *occupy* space. For then, what does space *occupy*? Things *negate* space, i.e. nothing. Thus, infinity may be predicated of space in the same manner that infinity is predicated of zero. Once this is established, the question whether the universe is finite or infinite becomes unnecessary; for it is empirically evident that it cannot be materially infinite though it may be spatially infinite. But to say space is infinite is not making a positive assertion of some existent thing but stating a negation. It simply means that things negate space and where there is no thing seen, there is nothing (i.e. space) seen. And nothing (zero) is intensively (by divisibility) and extensively (by multiplicity) infinite. Thus, space can be infinitely divided and multiplied; yet, it amounts to nothing for it is nothing.

In this manner, space ceases to be a subjective condition of perception. It is simply the apprehension of non-reality.

Thus, it may be argued that none of the forms or categories that Kant alludes to is *a priori*. Though one may not perceive reality as it is, being restricted to his senses, one can definitely know much of reality by use of reason. It may also be argued that the categories that Kant labels as *a priori* are in fact categories gained and generalized by reason to assist its deductive faculty. For instance, once one learns that smoke follows fire, the concept of smoke is integrally linked with fire thenceforth, until encountered by something contrary to that generalization. In the same manner, once one experiences an object in space-time, the concept of object is integrally linked with space-time, until encountered by something contrary to that generalization. It is no wonder that people have been able to write about two-dimensional space, *Flatland,*[69] and timeless eternity. The same may be said of causality also.

However, Kant's contention that the ontological and the cosmological arguments attempt a leap from contingency to necessity cannot be disregarded. Still, Kant doesn't let go off the hope that with the help of moral theology, transcendental theology will be able to someway establish the existence of God as a necessary, absolute, perfect, transcendent, and infinite being. The question is, if experience doesn't permit us to predicate such transcendental attributes to any phenomenally experienced object, on what basis does rational theology attribute the same to God? Evidently, as had been already stated earlier, reason in its attempt to find a ground for the

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[69] Edwin Abbott, "Flatland," *The Experience of Philosophy,* 2nd edn. (eds. Daniel Kolak & Raymond Martin; Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), p. 46ff

whole phenomena tends to find it in some existence that transcends this phenomenal world. However, since it attempts to establish the science of this divine reality on the basis of reason alone, it is left with nothing but itself alone in the search. Further, it finds that though the world is contingent, reason itself cannot be contingent but possesses the attributes of unity, necessity, universality, immutability, and transcendence without which it cannot find certainty of knowledge or know the truth. Now, reason doesn't mean a man or a woman who may reason fallaciously. Reason, here means the faculty of rational beings that is both the judge and law of all truth. In other words, it is by use of reason that one comes to know truth from error; and to use reason means nothing but to infer on the basis of the laws of reasoning. But inference is only possible when provided with data from experience. However, in reasoning towards ultimate reality, one is faced with the problems of plurality, contingency, finitude, change, and immanence. And since the rational criterion disallows the finality of anything of such nature, so unity, necessity, infinity, immutability, and transcendence are attributed to divine reality with the consequence that one is not sure what this being with such qualities looks like. One may reason that such attributes belong to God, but one cannot conceive of anyone possessing such attributes. Such attributes frustrate human imagination. On the other hand, as Kant rightly stated, there was no means by which to bridge the gap between this transcendental conception and the phenomenal world. No wonder then, that rationalism in both ancient Greece and India had tended towards monism and non-dualism in their attempt to fuse the transcendent with the immanent. Thus, the plurality and contingency of the universe was replaced with the unity or non-duality and the necessity of the same.

In conclusion, Kant well understood that the attempt to know God is severely handicapped by the limitations of data. His theory of forms and concepts does evoke some objections. However, his understanding of the failure of reason in bridging the gap between its notion of a necessary being and a contingent world is important. It has also been seen that the attributes that reason predicates of divine reality in monism, non-dualism, or any rational theology reflect the very qualities recognized as fundamental to something being called rational or true. It has, therefore, been said that the predication or projection of the transcendental attributes on to ultimate reality is nothing but a way in which reason attempts to establish the fundamental and ultimate nature of reality on the basis of rational principles. However, this immediately creates a gap between ultimate reality and phenomenal reality. The relation is unexplainable.

In light of this discovery, one can clearly see why the monists and non-dualists attempted to fuse the concept of a transcendental reality with that of phenomenal reality. Either the phenomenal reality is true or the transcendental reality is true. Since the phenomenal reality cannot be true being subject to change, transcendental reality alone must be true. On the other hand, there exists the certainty of only one thing: the self ('I think, therefore I am'). Consequently, reason reaches its final position when it fuses the concept of transcendence and immanence into a non-dual self as the substratum to all illusory phenomenal experience.

This fusion is expected as it also solves the problem of estrangement or alienation. Estrangement is the experience of existential frustration that man goes through on the failure of reason to find an absolute basis for his existence or its failure to bridge the gap between the transcendent and his own phenomenal experience. It produces the feeling of existential alienation, of being cut off

from reality itself,[70] and the loss of hope. Since a transcendent beyond can neither be proved nor disproved, the only one possibility remaining is to reject the 'subject and predicate alike,' to use Kant's own terms, of phenomenal experience and build up a theory that in some manner establishes the unity, eternality and necessity of being. This is what non-dualism exactly does: it fuses the concept of the transcendent with the immanent in supportive-framework--theory of *Maya,* which though maintaining the lesser reality of the phenomenal world contends for a reality that transcends the concept of phenomena. Thus, the path of pure reason can be seen to have led to monism and non-dualism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be said that though reason is a useful instrument in knowing several things, its use is handicapped in the absence of any empirical data. However, its quest for absolute certainty cannot be disregarded. It seeks to know truth as exclusive, absolute, immutable, and final. Such a quest becomes appropriate when considering truth regarding things. However, when this quest is directed towards knowing the ultimate absolute or final truth of reality, reason is left with nothing but itself and its standard of measurement. Norman Geisler gives three reasons for the inadequacy of reason for divine knowledge. First, logic is only a negative test for truth. It can eliminate what is false but cannot in and of itself establish what must be true.[71] In other words, reason is empty of real knowledge, i.e. knowledge of reality. Thus, it needs empirical data to deal with but cannot by itself without help of experience know the things. Second, there are no rationally inescapable arguments for the existence of God (the monotheistic God not the monist one) because it is always logically possible that nothing ever existed including God.[72] However, unlike Geisler, it has been seen that the undeniability of Being itself despite the deniability of everything else leads to monism and non-dualism. Geisler's third problem with rational epistemics is a strong one. He argues that there is no rationally inescapable way of establishing the first principles of reasoning.[73] In other words, if all knowledge must be based on and certified by reason to be true, what is it that certifies reason? Geisler concludes that rationalism 'is without a necessary rational basis of its own.'[74]

Kant's epistemology shows that there is no way in which one can bridge the chasm between the idea of a transcendent God and the phenomenal world. Even in the ontological argument, there is no way to show how the idea of God and the argument itself could necessitate the existence of God. The rational argument was just rational and could not necessitate the existence of anything by virtue of it. Rational arguments can at the most prove only logical necessity but never ontological necessity. Thus, the rational quest was left with a great chasm between rational possibility and empirical reality. No wonder then, this quest has been seen in the past to have led, in the absence of any empirical evidence regarding the existence of an absolute[75] to monism and non-dualism, wherein one finds a fusion of the transcendent with immanent reality to the extent

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[70] Especially when phenomena is perceived as ephemeral and transitory, it loses to one the status of reality itself, which reason expects to concur with the ideal of the truth and thus be immutable and eternal.

[71] Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, p. 45

[72] *Ibid*, p. 45

[73] *Ibid*, p. 45

[74] *Ibid*, p. 45

[75] The fact is that even if this absolute being or thing appeared in someway to anyone, reason could right away deny absoluteness to it on the grounds that by being thus limited to form (in which it appears) and conditions (space-time) it could not be absolute, infinite, and eternal.

of the rejection of the phenomenal world as false. However, since the epistemic procedure involved the use of reason without and at the expense of empirical data, or the devaluation of it, reason left with nothing but itself cannot be expected to provide any information about external reality, far long the knowledge of God. In contrast to pantheism, which stresses the immanence of God, monism and non-dualism, being true to their rationalistic ideal, stress on transcendence, as that nature of God by which he is different and above the *phenomenal* world. The real world is not plural as phenomenon shows but non-dual. In advaita philosophy, the self as the subjective part in the noetic process is postulated as the only reality. This is an inescapable conclusion seeing that the only thing reason seems to be sure of is of the thinking self (the 'I think, therefore I am').

Thus, reason alone and by itself cannot be considered to be a reliable guide to the knowledge of God. It has been seen that pure rational epistemics leads to monism and non-dualism, which are counter-empirical philosophies and reflections of the reason itself. Consequently, it may be concluded that reason cleft from experience cannot be a perfectly reliable guide to the knowledge of divine reality.