

ŚRĪHARṢA ON TWO PARADOXES OF INQUIRY

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1. Overview

Our topic: the 12th century Sanskrit philosopher and poet Śrīharṣa.

- *Śrīharṣa's View*. Śrīharṣa is a non-dualistic Vedāntin: he defends a kind of monism that emerges from the last part of the Vedic corpus—known as the *Upaniṣads*—sometimes also called “Vedānta” (literally, “the end of the Veda”).

NON-DUALISM. There is only one entity that exists *ultimately*, i.e., independently of our attitudes like judgements, beliefs, and desires: awareness or consciousness (*vijñāna*).

- *Śrīharṣa's Interlocutors*. In his only surviving philosophical work *A Confection of Refutation* (*Khaṇḍanakhāṇḍakhāḍya*), Śrīharṣa argues against Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers like Udayana (10th/11th century CE) who explicitly reject NON-DUALISM.
- *Anti-Rationalism*. Importantly, however, Śrīharṣa doesn't offer any positive argument for NON-DUALISM. Rather, he defends:

ANTI-RATIONALISM. There cannot be any successful rational inquiry into the question of what ultimately exists.

In this talk, I will consider two Meno-style paradoxes of inquiry that Śrīharṣa develops while motivating this view.

2. Meno in South Asia

A version of Meno's paradox is well-known amongst Sanskrit philosophers in the first millennium CE.

- *The Puzzle*. Both the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* and the *Brahmasūtra* begin by mentioning a desire for awareness (*jijñāsā*) as the driving motivation for their respective projects of inquiry.
 - *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.1: “Then, therefore, there is a desire to be aware of *dharma*” (*athāto dharmajijñāsā*).
 - *Brahmasūtra* 1.1.1: “Then, therefore, there is a desire to be aware of *brahman*” (*athāto brahmajijñāsā*).

These thinkers defend two views:

- PLURALISM. There are many different kinds of ultimately existent entities: substances, qualities, movements, universals, the relation of inherence amongst them, and so on.
- ANTI-SCEPTICISM. Our ordinary sources of knowledge—like perception and inference—give us knowledge about the entities that ultimately exist.

Śrīharṣa rejects both these claims: he dismantles definitions that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers (and other Sanskrit philosophers) offer for these ontological and epistemological categories.

States of awareness (*jñāna*), in this context, are non-factive occurrent mental states—like experiences or thoughts—that represent objects in the world to be a certain way.

The commentators of these texts—Śabarasvāmin (c. 400 CE) and Śaṅkara (8th century CE)—note that this gives rise to a puzzle. Take any putative object of inquiry *o*: either it is well-established (*prasiddha*) for the inquirer or it's not.

- If *o* is well-established, then the inquirer is already aware of *o*. So, they *should not* have the desire to be aware of *o*.
- If *o* is not well-established, then they are not aware of *o*. So, they *cannot* have the desire to be aware of *o*.

In either case, the inquirer should not have a desire to be aware of *o*.

- *The Unified Solution.* We are *generally* familiar with our object of inquiry.
 - But we are don't know what its specific characteristics are, perhaps because there are disagreements about it.
 - Without such specific awareness or knowledge, there is a substantial risk that we might fail to achieve our desired aims, like going to heaven or achieving liberation.

That is why we should desire to gain such specific awareness or knowledge through rational inquiry.

Śrīharṣa indirectly argues that this solution fails.

3. Triviality

Śrīharṣa imagines a debate between a theist and an atheist about the existence of the Lord (*īśvara*), an omnipotent and omniscient God-like being. The atheist raises the following challenge: “What is *a/the* source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) with respect to the Lord?” Śrīharṣa's puzzling claim is that even a trivial answer to this question can be adequate.

3.1. The Problem

- *The Initial Setup.* In the context of such a debate, the use of “what” (*kim*) could express a number of different things: (i) a denial; (ii) a condemnation; (iii) uncertainty; or, (iv) a questioning attitude. Śrīharṣa focuses on (iv).
- *Three Principles.* Next, Śrīharṣa introduces three principles.

Certainly, from the expression “what” that has a question as its meaning, the status of some entity as an object of a desire for awareness (*jijñāsyamānatā*) is apprehended. And, since [the word “what”]

See MSBh 14.21ff and BSBh 78.2ff.

Both Śabara and Śaṅkara seems to think that the only kind of rational inquiry that has a chance of succeeding is rational inquiry assisted by scripture (*śrutyānuṅghāta*). They assign two roles to rational inquiry: positive and negative.

- On the one hand, rational inquiry can help us discern the correct meaning of scriptural statements.
- On the other hand, rational inquiry can help us ward off putative defeaters that cast doubt on the status of scriptural statements as a guide to the nature of *dharma* or *brahman*.

The debate Śrīharṣa imagines is either truth-directed (*vāda*) or victory-directed (*jalpa*). By definition, each of these two kinds of debate is based on a disagreement between two people, such that one of them is certain in a thesis *P* while the other is certain in its anti-thesis $\sim P$.

See KKh §3.1.

KKh §3.3: *praśnārthāt khalu kimśabdāt kasyacit padārthasya jijñāsyamānatā pratīyate | sā ceha pramāṇapadasamabhivṛyāhārāt pramāṇaviśayinī pratīyate | yadvīśayaś ca prasnas tad uttaravādinā abhidheyam |*

is accompanied by the word “the source of knowledge” in this context, [that desire] is apprehended as having a source of knowledge as its object (*viṣaya*). Further, the respondent should (directly) convey (*abhi-√dā*) whatever is the object of the question.

The three principles can be reconstructed as follows.

- THE QUESTION-DESIRE PRINCIPLE. Any “what”-question that takes the form, “What is *o*?”, expresses a desire for awareness about *o*.
- THE QUESTION-OBJECT PRINCIPLE. If a “what”-question expresses a desire for awareness about *o*, then *o* is the object (*viṣaya*) of that question.
- THE ADEQUACY CONDITION FOR ANSWERS. An answer to a “what”-question’ is adequate just in case it (directly) conveys—i.e., refers to—the object of that question.

Together, these three principles entail that an answer to the “what”-question, “What is *o*?” is adequate just in case it (directly) conveys *o*.

- *The Problem.* Take the question, “What is *a/the* source of knowledge with respect to the existence of the Lord?”
 - If the question is, “What is *a* source of knowledge with respect to the existence of the Lord?” it may be taken to be a question about the kind of source of knowledge (*pramāṇasāmānya*)—e.g., inference—that proves the Lord’s existence.
 - If the question is, “What is *the* source of knowledge with respect to the existence of the Lord?” it may be taken to be a question about a specific source of knowledge (*pramāṇaviśeṣa*)—e.g., a specific inference—that proves the Lord’s existence.

The problem is this:

So, is this question intended to be directed at a kind of source of knowledge (*pramāṇasāmānya*) with respect to the Lord’s existence, or some particular [instance] of that (*tadviśeṣa*) [i.e., a specific source of knowledge]? If the first alternative were true, then the answer, “A source of knowledge with respect to the Lord’s existence,” would follow. For whatever is the object of a question, that is to be (directly) conveyed [in response]. And the question has as its object a kind of a source of knowledge, and that indeed (directly) conveyed by the expression “a source of knowledge.” If the second alternative were true, even then the very same answer, “The source of knowledge with respect to the Lord’s existence,” would follow. Just as the expression “the source of knowledge” conveys a particular [source of knowledge] in the utterance of the question, so too [does it convey a particular source of knowledge] in the utterance of the answer.

For Śrīharṣa and other Sanskrit philosophers of language, a linguistic expression directly conveys its literal referent (*mukhyārtha* or *vācyārtha*).

KKh §3.3: *tad ayaṃ īśvarasadbhāve
pramāṇasāmānyaviśayas tadviśeṣaviśayo vā
'bhīpretah? ādyaś cet, īśvarasadbhāve
pramāṇam ity evottaram āpadyeta,
yadviśayo hi praśnas tad abhidheyam |
pramāṇasāmānyaviśayaś ca praśnah, tac
ca pramāṇasābdenābhīdhīyata eva | atha
dvoitiyah, tathā 'pīśvarasadbhāve pramāṇam
ityevottaram āpadyeta | yathā praśnavākya
pramāṇasābdo viśeṣaparas tathottaravākya
'pi |*

Given the principles above, in either case, the trivial answer—*“a/the source of knowledge with respect to the existence of the Lord”*—should be deemed adequate because it (directly) conveys—i.e., refers to—whatever the object of the question is.

3.2 Responses

Śrīharṣa considers two responses to this problem: both reject the ADEQUACY CONDITION FOR ANSWERS.

- *Informativity*. They seek to replace it with:

THE REVISED ADEQUACY CONDITION FOR ANSWERS. An answer to a “what”-question’ is adequate just in case

- it (directly) conveys the intentional object of that question, and
- it is sufficiently informative in the context of the conversation.

- *The Strategy for Rejoinder*. Śrīharṣa argues that, no matter how we try to spell out informativity, the same problems will arise again.
 - *Response 1*. The first proposal says that an answer is informative just in case it picks out a specific alternative (amongst a range of salient alternatives).
Rejoinder. This doesn’t work because the definite description “the source of knowledge with respect to the Lord’s existence” could (in the relevant context) serve this purpose.
 - *Response 2*. The second proposal says that an answer is informative just in case it enables the questioner to distinguish a specific alternative from a range of other salient alternatives.
Rejoinder. But, if that discriminatory capacity is what the questioner desires, then they shouldn’t be asking a “what”-question, but rather should asking an *alternative question*.

- *The Upshot*. Śrīharṣa takes himself to be sketching an evasive strategy here:

If an opponent articulates (*nirvakti*) by means of a certain expression a certain intentional object of a certain kind through their own question, then that object of that kind should be (directly) conveyed by the respondent too in exactly that way by means of that very expression.

If something is the object of a question, then that should be stated [in reply]. And, by that expression, this object would be articulated. [For] you yourself—insofar as you express the object of your own question—have admitted this through your own utterance.

The thought is this.

This is a version of the old puzzle of inquiry that Śābara and Śaṅkara were concerned with.

- The implicit claim that, in order to initiate an inquiry into any object by means of a “what”-question, the questioner must already be aware of that object in order to pick it out by means of a description.
- But, then, answering the question in a non-trivial manner is unnecessary, given that the questioner has possesses the relevant awareness.

See, for example, the responses under KKh §3.4.

In other words, they should be asking, “Is the source of knowledge with respect to the Lord’s existence perception, inference, or testimony?” Śrīharṣa concedes that the answer to this question is, “Inference.” But, now, if the atheist asks, “What is the inference that proves the Lord’s existence?” the answer could again be, “The inference that proves the Lord’s existence.” To avoid this result, the atheist should ask, “Is it inference A, B, or C?” And so we keep going.

KKh §3.5: *yathāvidhaṃ yaṃ viśayaṃ nijasya praśnasya nirvakti paro yathoktyā | vācyaś tathāvottaravādinā ’pi tayaiva vācā sa tathāvidho ’rthaḥ | | praśnasya yaḥ syād viśayaḥ sa vācya vācā caīṣa bhaven niruktaḥ | idaṃ tvayā ’py āsthitam etayaiva girā svaprachhāviśayasya vaktrā | |*

- If the questioner simply expresses a desire for awareness regarding a kind of entity or a specific entity, *o*, through their question, the trivial answer “*o*” itself should suffice.
- If what they are expressing is a desire for the capacity to discriminate *o* from other salient alternatives, they should be asking alternative questions.

This, in turn, would require them to take on more epistemic work, since they would now have to lay out a menu of alternatives, whereas the opponent can simply take their pick from it.

4. Incoherence

Śrīharṣa’s second paradox of inquiry involves the claim that we cannot coherently ask evidence-seeking “what”-questions in debates that are based on genuine disagreement.

4.1 The Dilemma

- *The Setup*

Moreover, on the basis of the expression “what” that has a question as its meaning, the status of an object as an object of a desire for awareness is apprehended. And a desire for awareness is a desire to become aware. And a desire doesn’t arise with respect to something that isn’t an object of awareness, since that would lead to a problem of overgeneration. Therefore, the person who desires to be aware of the source of knowledge with respect to the existence of the Lord should describe their own awareness [of that source], which serves as the cause for their desire. Would that awareness be inaccurate, or accurate?

KKh §3.6: *praśnārthāc ca kiṃśabdāt
jijñāsāviśayatā ’rthasya pratīyate | jijñāsā
ca jñātum icchā | icchā ca nājnāte bhavati,
atiprasaṅgāt | tasmād īśvaraviśayaṃ
pramāṇaṃ jñātum icchatā tatra svajñānam
icchākāraṇībhūtaṃ vaktavyam | tad
ayathārthaṃ yathārthaṃ vā syāt?*

Śrīharṣa takes as his starting point a principle that Śābara and Śaṃkara accept: namely, that an agent who inquires about an object must be (generally) aware of that object. More carefully,

THE DESIRE-AWARENESS PRINCIPLE. An agent can only desire to be aware of an object *o* if they are antecedently aware of *o*.

So, the atheist who desires to be aware of a source of knowledge with respect to the Lord’s existence must already be aware of such a source.

For example, they must already be able to imagine or conceive a state of affairs where some source of knowledge proves the Lord’s existence.

- *The Dilemma*. The atheist must admit either that the awareness is accurate, or that it is inaccurate.
- *Horn 1*. If they admit that the awareness is accurate, then they will have to admit there is a source of knowledge with respect to the Lord’s existence. That’s bad.
- *Horn 2*. The better strategy is to say that the relevant awareness is inaccurate, since there is no genuine source of knowledge with respect to the Lord’s existence. But, then, the desire that the atheist expresses by means of their question becomes unintelligible.

KKh §3.6.

- *Option 1.* The atheist wants the theist to produce yet another false awareness about the same intentional object.
- *Option 2.* The atheist wants the theist to produce an accurate state of awareness about the same intentional object.

Śrīharṣa argues that neither of these make sense.

- Take *Option 1.* Given that the atheist himself is capable of falsely imagining a source of knowledge that establishes the Lord's existence, they need no help from the theist in producing such a false state of awareness.
- Take *Option 2.* The atheist is certain that *any* state of awareness that represents a source of knowledge as proof for the Lord's existence is false. If the atheist wants the theist to produce a state of awareness that *accurately* portrays a source of knowledge as proof for the Lord's existence, then they want something that is impossible by their own lights. So, their desire is incoherent.

4.2 Responses

Śrīharṣa considers two responses to this dilemma.

- *Response 1.* The initial response is to appeal to the commitments of the theist: since the theist is committed to there being a source of knowledge with respect to the Lord's existence, they are being asked to cite such a source of knowledge.

- *Rejoinder.*

We don't have any commitment of the following sort: "We should demonstrate that the fake source of knowledge with respect to the existence of the Lord—which you have apprehended by mistake as a source of knowledge—has the status of being a source of knowledge." Rather, we should establish the source of knowledge with respect to the existence of the Lord—which you have apprehended by mistake to be a fake source of knowledge—to be a source of knowledge.

- *Response 2.* The atheist could say that they don't take a stance on whether the putative source of knowledge in question is in fact a source of knowledge or not. They only want the theist tell them that it proves the existence of the Lord (KKh §3.7).
- *Rejoinder.* The theist can simply accomplish this task by producing an inaccurate state of awareness about there being such a source of knowledge. For example, they could just state a bad argument for the existence of the Lord. But, surely, even the atheist can come up with such bad arguments.

KKh §3.6: 'Suppose [that awareness] is inaccurate. If what you as a questioner want is that, with respect to this intentional object of an inaccurate awareness, we should produce just [another] inaccurate awareness, then what's the point of depending on another for something that is within one's control? ...Suppose what you want is this: 'Whatever might the intentional object of my inaccurate awareness be, that should be turned into an intentional object of my accurate awareness by you.' Then, due to a contradiction, your undertaking towards this sort of purpose will itself make no sense." (*athāyathārtham, tatrāsminn ayathārthajñānaviśaye yady asmābhir ayathārtham eva jñānam utpādānīyam iti bhavataḥ pṛcchato vāñcitam tadā keyaṃ svādhitve 'rthe parāpeṣā? ...atha madīyasyāyathārthajñānasya yo viśayaḥ saḥ madīyayathārthajñānaviśayo bhavatā kriyatām iti tvadīyaṃ vāñcitam, tadā vyāghātād idṛśy arthe bhavataḥ pravṛttir evānupapannā !*)

KKh §3.7: *ya īśvarasadbhāvaviśayo bhavatā pramāṇābhāsaḥ pramāṇatayā bhrāntīyā pratītaḥ, tasya pramāṇatvam asmābhir vyutpādānīyam iti nāsmākaṃ idṛśaḥ siddhāntaḥ | pratīyuteś-varasadbhāvaviśayaṃ yat pramāṇaṃ bhavatā pramāṇābhāsatvena bhrāntīyā pratītam asti tat pramāṇanīyam iti |*

- *Response 3.* The atheist could say that they are in fact uncertain about whether there is a source of knowledge with respect to the Lord's existence. They want the theist to resolve the uncertainty.
- *Rejoinder.* Then, the atheist should not be debating the theist as *an atheist*.

This is not the case. For, if this were so, due to [your] uncertainty about the accuracy and the inaccuracy of that awareness, this question would be [asked] by you who are uncertain about the existence of the Lord, which in turn is the intentional object of the source of knowledge that is the intentional object of that awareness. But it wouldn't be a question [asked] by someone who disagrees. And so, assume the status of a disciple and please us a while by serving at our feet. We shall shatter your uncertainty.

- *The Upshot.* Given that the atheist is already certain that any awareness as of there being a source of knowledge with respect to the Lord's existence is inaccurate, they cannot coherently ask the theist to produce an accurate state of awareness with that content.

5. Anti-Rationalism

The second paradox of inquiry—the paradox of incoherence—is intimately connected to Śrīharṣa's ANTI-RATIONALISM, i.e., the view that there cannot be any successful rational inquiry into the question of what ultimately exists.

- *The Paradox of Incoherence (Again).* In the very first chapter of the *Refutation*, Śrīharṣa poses a similar puzzle of inquiry in response to an opponent who asks, "What is the source of the knowledge with respect to non-duality?"

[The opponent:] What is the source of knowledge with respect to non-duality?

[Reply:] First of all, this very question doesn't make sense for someone who doesn't countenance non-duality.

Śrīharṣa explains the idea again by appealing to an analogue of the DESIRE-AWARENESS PRINCIPLE.

THE QUESTION-AWARENESS PRINCIPLE. It is not appropriate for an agent to ask, "What is the source of knowledge with respect to *o*?" unless they are already aware of *o*.

So, it is not appropriate for someone to ask the relevant question unless they were already aware of non-duality: at least, they must be able to imagine what intentional object with respect to which they are seeking a source of knowledge.

KKh §3.8: *naitad asti |
evam hi tasyāṃ pratītau
yathārthatvāyathārthatvasaṃśayena
tasyāḥ pratīter gocaro yat pramāṇam
tasyāpi yo 'sau viśaya īśvarasadbhāvas tatra
sarvatraiva saṃśayānasya bhavataḥ praśno
'yam na tu vipratipannasyeti syāt tathā
ca svīkuru śiṣyabhāvaṃ, prasādaya ciraṃ
caraṇaśuśraṣābhīr asmān, chetsyāmas te
saṃśayam iti |*

KKh §1.99: *nanv advaite kiṃ pramāṇam |
praśna eva tāvad advaitam anaṅgikurvato
nopapadyate |*

KKh §1.99: "And that question would make sense only if that sort of an intentional object were to appear in your awareness. This is because a question is a specific linguistic utterance and linguistic utterances are restricted to the contents (*viśaya*) of the states of awareness that produce them. Otherwise, since there couldn't be anything else that allows for the restriction of linguistic utterances to their (own) contents, there would be the undesirable result that those linguistic utterances and their contents would be mixed up." (*tac ca tadaivopapadyate yadi tādr̥śaṃ te pratītim ārohet | praśnasya vāgvavahārahāraṇiśeṣatvāt vyavahārasya ca svajanakajñānaviśayaniyatatvāt | anyathā vyavahārānām viśayaniyamaprayojakasyānyasyāsambhavana vyavahāraviśayapāriplavāpatteḥ |*)

- *The Dilemma*. That (imaginative) awareness of non-duality is either a state of learning or knowledge-acquisition (*pramiti*), or not a state of learning.
 - *Horn 1*. If it is a state of learning, then whatever method gives rise to that awareness of non-duality will be the source of knowledge with respect to non-duality.
 - *Horn 2*. Presumably, if the opponent is a Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinker who rejects NON-DUALISM, they would think that the relevant awareness of non-duality isn't a state of learning; in fact, it is inaccurate. But, then, in asking the non-dualist to produce an accurate state of awareness with respect to what is in fact unreal, they will be asking for the impossible.

- *Response*. Śrīharṣa goes on to consider the same response to this dilemma that he considered earlier: given that the non-dualistic Vedāntin is committed to NON-DUALISM, they are responsible for citing a source of knowledge respect to it.
 - *Rejoinder 1*. Even though the non-dualist is committed to non-duality, they are not responsible for showing that the intentional object or the content of the inaccurate awareness that their opponent undergoes can in fact be known (KKh §1.101).

- *Rejoinder 2*. But the second rejoinder is much more interesting:

Even if I were to accept non-duality, would the instrument of that very same awareness of yours necessarily be a source of knowledge simply in virtue of that? If someone, having apprehended mist as smoke, infers fire on a hill that in fact contains fire, is their awareness as of there being smoke, which has the mist as its intentional object, to be accepted as a source of knowledge merely because of this?

The example:

Mist and Fire. I see what appears to smoke emerging from a hill. I remember that wherever there is smoke, there is fire. So, I judge that there is fire on the hill. In fact, what I saw is just mist. But, luckily, there is fire on the hill.

Elsewhere in *Refutation*, Śrīharṣa notes that, even though one's judgement in a case like this may be true, one doesn't acquire any knowledge in making this judgement. Even if the opponent is somehow able to accurately imagine what non-duality is, that doesn't mean that there would a source of knowledge corresponding to that accurate awareness.

The point generalises.

KKh §1.100-1: "But, if you say that non-duality—which is the intentional object of the question—is an object of your awareness, then is that awareness of yours a state of learning (*pramiti*), or not a state of awareness? If it is the first, whatever serves as the means (*karaṇa*) for that awareness will be accepted even by you to be the source of knowledge with regard to non-duality. So, a question about that is futile...And, if it is the second, then why would there not be a contradiction for you—who think that the awareness of non-duality is not a knowledge-event—in asking the question, 'What is the source of knowledge with respect to something that is an intentional object of an awareness that isn't knowledge-event?'" (*yadi cādvaitam praśnaviśayaḥ pratītam ucyate tadā tatpratītis te pramā vā syād apramā vā | ādye yad eva tasyāḥ pramāyāḥ karaṇam tad evādvaite pramāṇam tavāpi sampratipannam iti vṛthā tasya praśnaḥ | yadi ca dvitīyah, tadānīm advaitapratītim apramāṇam manyamānasya tava apramāviśaye kiṃ pramāṇam iti katham na praśno vyāhanyeta |*)

KKh §1.101: *yadi nāma mayā advaitam abhyupeyate tāvatā kiṃ tāvakīnasya tajjñānasya ka- raṇam avāśyaṃ pramāṇam syāt | vastuto vahmimaty api parvate yadi kaścid vāṣpaṃ dhūmaṃ pratītya tato vahnim anuminoṭi tāvatā (kiṃ) vāṣpaviśayaṃ dhūmajñānaṃ tatkaraṇam pramāṇam eṣṭavyam iti |*

- *Anti-Rationalism*. For Śrīharṣa, from a conventional standpoint, it is the Upaniṣads that serve as a source of knowledge with the non-dual nature of consciousness.
- The Upaniṣads—insofar as they cannot describe the nature of consciousness without distortion—cannot accurately represent the nature of ultimate reality. They can only tell us what ultimate reality is not.

Therefore, experience (*anubhava*) isn't the intentional object of any linguistic usage that arises due to the apprehension of properties. On the basis of its not being temporally limited, it is figuratively called eternal. On the basis of its not being spatially limited, it is described as all-pervading. On the basis of the absence of any limitation imposed by qualifying characteristics, it is said to have the nature of everything, to be non-dual, and so on.

- But having trust or faith (*śraddhā*) in the contents of the Upaniṣads clears room for a kind of non-conceptual—metaphysically and epistemic direct—awareness that gives us direct access to the non-dual nature of consciousness.

First of all, even though you are fond of revelling in ignorance, you should have faith in this non-duality which is presented by these arguments that are endowed with the characteristics of good arguments established on your own view. And, after that, as you inwardly desire to be aware of the nature of the highest self on the basis of this faith in the content of the Upaniṣads, you—when ordinary mental occurrences have been expelled from your consciousness—will become directly aware of that [nature of the highest self] to which self-presenting awareness bears witness and which far surpasses the taste of honey.

On Śrīharṣa's view, the role of reason is limited to creating the conditions for faith in the Upaniṣads: it merely shows us that there cannot be any defeater for the testimony given by the Upaniṣads. It cannot help us discover the nature of ultimate reality.

KKh §1.76: *ata eva dharmopagrahapravarttiṣṇuvāgvyavahār[ā]viṣayatvam | kālānavacchedam ādāya nity-atopacārah | deśānavacchedam ādāya vibhutoavyapadeśah | prakāranavacchedavirahanibandhanaś ca sarvātmatvādvaitādivyavahārah |*

KKh §1.135: *tad idam etābhir ātmamatasiddhasadyuktīlaksāṇopapannābhir yuktibhir upanīyamānam advaitam avidyāvilāsalāso 'pi śraddadhātu bhavān | tadanu cānayaivaupanīṣadarthaśraddhayā 'dhyātmaṃ jīñāsamānaḥ paramātmataṭṭvam kramād vṛttivyāvṛttacetāḥ svaprakāśasākṣikam māksīkarasātisāyi svātmanaiva sakṣātkarīṣyate |*

Abbreviations

BSBh: Śāstrī, N. S. Anantakṛṣṇa and Pāṇasikara, Vasudeva Lakṣmaṇa Śarmā (eds.) (1917). *Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣyam*. Mumbai: Nirṇayasāgara Press.
KKh: Ganganātha Jha (ed.) (1904–1914). *Śrīharṣapraṇītam Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyam*. Benares: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Book Depot.
MSBh: Frauwallner, Erich (ed.) (1968). *Materialien zur ältesten Erkenntnislehre der Karmamīmāṃsā*. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften.