

**PHILOSOPHICAL DISCREPANCIES IN THE CONCEPT
OF REALITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
ŚAṂKARA AND KANT**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I, Zairunisha, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled *Philosophical Discrepancies in the Concept of Reality: A Comparative Study of Śaṅkara and Kant* submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is an authentic work and has not been submitted for any other degree or diploma of any other University to the best of my knowledge.



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CERTIFICATE

This to certify that the dissertation entitled *Philosophical Discrepancies in the Concept of Reality: A Comparative Study of Śamkara and Kant* submitted by Zairunisha, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is her original work and to the best of our knowledge, it has not been submitted by her or by anyone else in part or in full for any other degree or diploma of this or any other University or any other institution.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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PREFACE

The present work is the study of philosophical discrepancies in the concept of reality: a comparative study of Śaṅkara and Kant. My main aim of this work is to give a clear, comprehensive and critical account of the status of reality in Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophy. The work is based on my study of the original writings of Śaṅkara's *Prasthānatraya: (Upaniṣada, Brahm-sūtra-Bhāṣya and Gītā)* and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Relevant books and articles were also useful while carrying out this study. In the field of philosophy, Śaṅkara and Kant are considered to be one of the foremost scholars. However, they belong to different era and tradition. Śaṅkara lived in 788 A.D and Kant belongs to 18th century. They were from Indian and Western tradition respectively. Śaṅkara represents *Advaita Vedānta* perspective whereas Kant is a representative of the German Idealism. Before I undertake the comparison of Śaṅkara's and Kant's status of reality, I have discussed the perspective of these thinkers on the concept of reality within the framework of ontology/metaphysics and epistemology. I have also analysed the concepts of reality by the predecessors of Śaṅkara and Kant from whom the thinkers heavily influenced.

We can understand the concept of reality ontologically and epistemologically. From the ontological point of view, Śaṅkara explains reality in terms of *pañcakoṣas, Brahman, Māyā, Vivartavāda, Ātman, Avasthātraya* (three levels of reality i.e. *jāgrat, svapna and susupti*), *Sāksichaitany and Mokṣa*. He defines the epistemological status of reality with reference to *Pramāna vyavasthā* or valid means of achieving knowledge. On the other hand, Kant explains reality as a noumenon and phenomenon within the ontological framework. In terms of epistemology, he discusses reality as a category of affirmative judgment under quality.

Although Śaṅkara and Kant lived in different time frames and belong to distant parts of the globe, yet they have several similarities related to the question of reality. To compare and contrast both the thinkers I have analysed their concept of reality under four sections. They are: Ontological/Metaphysical levels of Reality, Epistemological Position of *Pramānas* and Categories, Role of *Aprokshāṇubhūti* and Intellectual Intuition, and, the last is reality in terms of *Saksin* and Self. Both the thinkers say that reality can be known through intuition. But they based their analysis of knowing reality in a different manner. Kant denies the presence of intuition in human being therefore Kantian reality is unknown and unknowable, whereas for Śaṅkara, reality can be known through *Aprokshāṇubhūti*. He declares that the man who knows the reality by such intuition becomes reality itself. Through the aforementioned analysis, I will bring out the similarities and differences on the status of reality by Śaṅkara and Kant. I will also use *Advaitic* perspective to propose solutions to the problems that have arisen during the course of the study.

INTRODUCTION

I, in the present study, shall expound and examine the philosophical discrepancies in the concept of reality: a comparative study of Śaṅkara and Kant. Śaṅkara's philosophy propounded in the *Prasthānatraya* is known as *Advaita Vedānta* and it has developed out of *Sāṅkhya* on the one hand and *Mādhyaṃika Sūnyavāda* on the other. Kant is the founder of German idealism of the 18th century. Though there are historical, cultural, intellectual and geographical differences between Śaṅkara and Kant, yet there are philosophical similarities on the concept of reality between them. I will try to bring out the similarities and differences between Śaṅkara and Kant so, that a philosophical analysis of the concept of reality is properly comprehended.

In general, 'Reality' is something that essentially exists, without imagination and imitation. It includes the whole universe and nothing exists outside it; there is nothing else beside it. In other words, reality means the totality of what is, as opposed to what merely seems to be. Reality can be understood in social, political, religious, psychological and ethical frameworks. In philosophy, we address two different perspectives of reality namely: Ontological/Metaphysical, which define the nature of reality in terms of substance and existence; and Epistemological, which describes reality in terms of ultimate cognition.

Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophical thoughts did not emerge in vacuum but drawn heavily from the philosophical legacy of their predecessors. They have done this by embracing the works of their earlier philosophers. The major influence on Śaṅkara's philosophy is that of *Prasthānatraya* (*Upaniṣada, Brahmā-sūtra-Bhāṣya and Gītā*) as well as of *Sāṅkhya-yoga* and *Mādhyaṃika sūnyavāda*. He borrowed the idea of supreme reality which is the unity of *Brahman* and *Ātman* and also the idea of *Avasthātray* from the *Upaniṣadas*. From *Brahma-Sūtra*, he borrowed the idea of *Adhyāsa* and *Pramāṇa-vyavasthā*. According to *Adhyāsa*, the whole world is a super-imposition of absolute reality i.e., *Brahman*. However, the world is real till the time we do not acquire the knowledge of *Brahman*, which proves the reality of the world by the means of *pramāṇas*.

Likewise, he derives the concept of *yoga* from *Gītā*. Precisely, he uses *karmayoga* and *bhaktiyoga* as a means to know the ultimate reality, which is derived from *Gītā*. He also utilizes the ideas of creation, evolution, *puruṣa*, *antaḥkaraṇa*, in their modified forms, from the cosmology of *Sāṃkhya*'s school of thought. The method of *Sādhana-chatuṣṭay*, through which one can achieve the knowledge of supreme reality, is derived by him from the philosophy of *Yoga*. He also borrowed from its proponent *Mādhyamika sūnyavāda*, the two levels of reality namely, *Samyṛiti* and *Parmārtha* in the form of *Vyavhārika* and *Parmāthika*. Thus, Śaṃkara influenced by various schools of thought and ideas to cognize the notion of reality.

Likewise, Kant's philosophy is also hugely influenced by the philosophy of his predecessors. Prior to Kant, two traditions exercised great influence in the western philosophical thought – rationalists and empiricists, which explains reason and senses individually as a means of knowledge. Kant incorporated both these thoughts into his philosophy. In addition to this, Kant's philosophy appears to be greatly influenced by philosophers like Descartes, Hume, Locke and Newton. The present dissertation work is based on the original text and authentic translations in which I am mainly focusing on the concept of reality with special reference to Śaṃkara and Kant.

The concept of reality has been a debatable issue in the history of philosophy. Śaṃkara and Kant, the pillars of the philosophy of East and West, have immensely contributed to this debate with their thinking. I have analyzed their concept of reality within the frameworks of ontology/metaphysics and epistemology. In ontological framework, Śaṃkara accepts reality as *Pañcakoṣa*, *Brahman*, *Māyā*, *Vivartavāda*, *Ātaman*, *Avasthātray* (three levels of reality), *Sāksichaitanya* and *Mokṣa*. Whereas for Kant, reality means the realm of noumenon and phenomenon. From epistemological context, Śaṃkara explains reality in terms of *Pramānavicāra*, *anirvachṇya khyātivāda* and *Antaḥkaraṇa*. However, Kant discussed reality as a category of understanding in epistemological terms. In the present study, these differences will be critically analyzed by comparison. While doing so, I have also focused on the problems that have surfaced in the comparative analysis of Śaṃkara's and Kant's views on the question of reality.

The problems that I have focused here are related to the contestation of Śaṅkara's and Kant's notion of reality by other thinkers. Śaṅkara's status of reality is disputed by other school of Indian philosophy. Questions were raised such as, is reality one or many? Does reality exist or not? Can reality be known by man? etc. Similarly, Kant's philosophy of reality was also opposed by different scholars and questions were raised, such as, is reality completely unknown and unknowable? Is true universal and necessary judgment possible? What is the possibility and validity of knowledge? So both the philosophers' thinking of reality has been contested by other philosophers. Here, an attempt is made to make an objective analysis of the questions leveled by various thinkers. In the course of that, I have also tried to identify the similarities and differences in Śaṅkara's and Kant's status of reality by comparison and used *Advaitic* perspective to propose solutions to the differences that had arisen in the issues.

On the notion of reality, both Śaṅkara and Kant agree to some extent within the ontological and epistemological framework. Ontologically, both the philosophers believe in an inherent difference between *Vyavahārika* and *Paramārthika* or noumenon and phenomenon. Epistemologically, they accept that experienced world could be known through *Pramānas* and categories; and that which lies beyond experience like noumenon and *Paramārthika* could not be understood through these means of knowledge. In addition, both the philosophers also consider *Sākṣi* and Self as the presuppositions of our knowledge and experiences. While they agree on above concepts, they do contradict regarding reality in some respect, which are as follows:

1. For Śaṅkara reality can be known but for Kant noumenon is unknown and unknowable.
2. Śaṅkara accepts *Śruti* as *Pramāna* through which reality can be understood whereas Kant denies the possibility of the category of understanding on reality.
3. Both the thinkers agree that reality can be known through intuition; however, they viewed it differently. According to Kant, it is possible in God but for Śaṅkara, man has this intuition within himself which means one who knows reality by such intuition would become reality itself.

My main concern is to critically evaluate and analyze the background and the basic issues of the status of reality in the philosophy of Śaṅkara and Kant with the help of their primary texts.

The method that I have adopted in the study is comparative, analytical and critical in nature. The comparative part of the study would track the comparison between Śaṅkara and Kant on the status and nature of reality. A critical and analytical part is used as the primary methodological style during the entire course of writing in order to organize my presentation. Along with these explanations and evaluations, the present study, excluding its introduction and conclusion, is divided into three chapters. The general plan of the study is the first and second chapters are divided into two sections each and the third chapter is divided into four sections.

In Chapter-I, entitled, Status of Reality in Śaṅkara's Philosophy, I expound the nature and status of the concept of reality in Śaṅkara's philosophy within the ontological and epistemological framework. According to Śaṅkara, reality is *Ātman*, *Brahman*, pure consciousness which is devoid of all attributes (*Nirguṇa*) and all categories of the intellect (*Nirviśeṣa*), *Satya*, *Vāstava*, *Paramārtha*, *Paramapurusa*, *Sat*, *Cit*, *Ānanda*, *Sāksin*, *Mokṣa*, *Nitya* and so on. Historically, prior to Śaṅkara, the concept of reality has been already analyzed by *Sāṅkhya* school of thought and *Buddhist* thinkers. Influentially, Śaṅkara originates his cosmology i.e. theory of creation, concept of soul and *antaḥkarṇa* from *sāṅkhya* philosophy. The eminent *Buddhist* scholar, Nāgārjun draws the distinction between empirical truth (*Samvṛti-Satt*) and absolute truth (*Paramārth-satt*). Both the truths are related to two regions of reality and merges into one reality that is '*Prapañchashoṇya*' (pure form of reality). Śaṅkara also understand the reality in the same manner. According to Śaṅkara, there are three levels of reality. The first level corresponds with Nāgārjun's empirical truth (*Vyāvahārika-satt*). The second level is the imaginary truth (*Pratibhāsika-satt*) which is an addition to what Nāgārjun proposes. And the third level is *Paramārthika* which denotes the real nature of things, which we cannot describe through reason and language and it corresponds with Nāgārjun's absolute truth. All of these are discussed in the first chapter under two sections.

In the very first section, Ontological/Metaphysical status of reality, I have tried to explore and examine the reality in terms of Śaṅkara's *Pañcakośas* (the five sheaths) i.e. *Annamaya*, *Prānamaya*, *Manomaya*, *Vijñanamaya* and *Ānandmaya*. The physical or outer part of the universe or body is called *annamaya*; behind the sheath of this body, there is another self "consisting of vital breath" which is called the self as vital breath (*prānamaya*). Again, behind this there is another self "consisting of will" called the *manomaya ātman*. This again contains within it the self "consisting of consciousness" called the *vijñanamaya ātman*. Behind it, we come to the final essence the self as pure bliss the *ānandmaya Brahman*.

Ontologically, Śaṅkara also explores the nature of reality as *Brahman* in terms of *Sat*, *cit*, *Ānanda*, and *Satyaṃ*, *Jñanam*, *Anantaṃ*. *Sat* means existent or pure being, *cit* expresses the nature of *Brahman* as pure consciousness and *ānanda* reflects *Brahman* as pure bliss. The other three terms i.e., *Satyaṃ*, *Jñanam* and *Anantaṃ*, represents three different meanings of reality. But they are all related to reality as *Brahman* and demonstrate his characteristics. A thing is said to be *satya* or truth, when it does not change the nature that is ascertained to be its own. *jñāna* means *Brahman* is known as the cause of the phenomenon world and *anantaṃ* means *Brahman* is infinite.

Śaṅkara proves the illusoriness of the world by the theory of *Vivartavāda*. According to this theory, the effect is merely superimposition of cause. The only cause is real and the effect is appearance. The world has no independent existence apart from *Brahman*. He also defines the status of reality in terms of *Avasthātraya* which has three stages and they are *jāgrata*, *svapna* and *susupti*. The Consciousness is present and witness in all the above three stages. This witness of Consciousness is designated as *Śakṣinchaitanya* which is an unchangeable entity. In this manner, it is a reality. But it is not possible to understand the Consciousness under the knowledge situation. There is a fourth stage, which is known as *Turīya*, where we can grasp the complete form of Consciousness as *Brahman*. This is an ultimate reality. Śaṅkara calls this stage as *Jīvan mukti* when individual self obtains a real knowledge. It liberates itself from worldly bondages. This level of reality is recognised as *moksa*.

The second section of the chapter-I, Epistemological status of reality, is related to the status of reality in terms of *Antahkaraṇa* and *Pramāṇavicāra*. *Antahkaraṇa* is the inherent, innate tendencies of human being. They are four fold - *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Ahṅkar* and *Citta*. He also accepts six *Pramānas* which he considers as the means of obtaining a valid knowledge. They are *perception*, *inference*, *comparison*, *verbal testimony*, *presumption* and *non-apprehension*.

Perception (*Pratyakṣa*) is the direct consciousness of objects. The objects obtained generally through the exercise of the senses. But sometime perceptions become unclear and erroneous. This is called illusory perception or *Khyāti*. Śaṅkara also accepts *Anirvacanīya khyātivāda*, which means illusion consists in the superimposition of one object or the quality of one object on another. Next is the inference (*Anumān*) which is defined as cognition which presupposes some other cognition. Verbal testimony (*Śabd*) is the knowledge of supra sensible objects which is produced by the comprehension of the meanings of words. He divides testimony into two parts personal (*paṇḍitaseya*) and impersonal (*apaṇḍitaseya*). The former is the testimony of the trustworthy persons (*āptavākya*) and the latter is the testimony of the vedas (*vedavākya*). It is valid in itself. The fourth *pramāna* is (*upmāna*). It is the knowledge of similarity of an unknown object like a wild cow with a known object like cow. Presumption (*Arthāpatti*) is the assumption of an unperceived fact in order to reconcile two apparently inconsistent perceived facts. And the last *pramāna* is negation (*anupalabdhi*) which means non-existence of the object.

Śaṅkara also distinguishes three levels of reality namely absolute reality (*Paramārthika satt*), empirical reality (*Vyavahārika satt*) and imaginary reality (*Pratibhāsika satt*). *Paramārthika* means the cessation of all empirical dealings in the state of the highest reality. *Vyāvahārika* is our empirical world. It is the sphere of becoming or appearance. This world is real as long as we perceive it through senses but it is realized as unreal when *Brahman* is known. The third level of reality is *Pratibhāsika*. This level is real during illusion and it does not exist when we see empirical things as its ground.

In the second chapter, Status of Reality in Kant's Philosophy, I discuss the Kant's concept of reality within the framework of ontology and epistemology. Kant uses the term reality for category of understanding through which we know the phenomenon world or the experienced world. So, here, in the first division, I will discuss the epistemological status of reality of Kant. He has proposed twelve categories of understanding from the corresponding judgment and divided them into four sections, and those are analyzed in the chapter, with a main focus on the section of the quality. Within the section of quality the concept of reality as an affirmative judgment is involved. These categories are applicable only in the realm of phenomenon and what could not be understood through it is unknown and unknowable. Hence, in Kant's philosophy, the noumenon could not be known through these categories because these categories are not applicable to the noumenon. An attempt is made to study this in the second section of this chapter.

In the second section, namely, Ontological/Metaphysical status of reality, Kant's reality in terms of *Noumenon and Phenomenon* is explained. These are the two complete separate spheres with no mediating transitions. The noumenon is completely free from the applicability of categories like quality, quantity, cause – effect, etc and a phenomenon is the sphere where these categories are applicable. Noumenon is the base of phenomenon but this noumenon is unknown and unknowable. This distinction is based on Kant's fundamental thesis that scientific knowledge has its jurisdiction within the world of phenomenon and that there is a realm of the spiritual into which science cannot penetrate. He limits the sphere of scientific knowledge to phenomenon in order to leave room for faith.

In the third and final chapter, namely, Comparison between Śaṅkara and Kant, I present the critical comparison and analysis between Śaṅkara's and Kant's concept of reality. In order to compare and contrast, I have divided the chapter into four parts - Ontological/Metaphysical levels of Reality, Epistemological Position of *Pramānas* and Categories, Role of *Aprokṣānūbhūti* and Intellectual intuition, and Reality in terms of *Sākṣin* and Self. In the first section, I give a comparison between Śaṅkara and Kant on the Ontological/Metaphysical levels of reality. In general, Śaṅkara takes the realms of

Paramārthika and *Vyavahārika* as reality of higher and lower level. He draws a distinction between higher and lower levels of reality from epistemological point of view, but from the metaphysical point of view, there is no separation between higher reality and lower reality. Contrary to Śaṅkara, Kant does not differentiate reality as higher and lower level. Even, he does not apply the term ‘reality’ for the realm of noumenon and phenomenon. According to him, reality is a concept under the category of quality which constitutes an affirmative judgment. But both the thinkers make a clear distinction between *Paramārthika* & *Vyavahārika* and Noumenon & phenomenon.

In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the epistemological position of reality in terms of *Pramānas* and Categories. Both *Pramānas* and categories are used as the means of acquiring knowledge. Both are required to justify what is in appearance and what is in reality. Both Śaṅkara and Kant raise the same question - How we know that something exists or something does not exist in the phenomenal world? And the answer is arrived only through *Pramānas* and categories.

Śaṅkara says all our empirical knowledge is possible only through the *Pramānas*. But the realization of *Paramārtha* is not possible through it. All the *Pramānas*, except *śruti*, is strictly limited to empirical level. *Sruti* is applicable to the sphere of *Paramārthika*. Similarly, Kant says knowledge of an object is possible only through the categories of understanding. The categories are limited to phenomenon only, and it cannot be applied to noumenon. The second similarity between *Pramānas* and categories is that both are operated by consciousness. All *Pramānas* are provided by consciousness. In Śaṅkara’s philosophy, consciousness is itself luminous and self-proved. Like Śaṅkara, Kant believes that unity of apperception or ‘I think’ constitutes the ultimate subject of knowledge. He also accepts that categories are not applied to it.

In the third section of the third chapter i.e., the Role of *Aprokṣānubhūti* and Intellectual intuition, I try to examine the possibility, validity and limitation of the human cognition to acquiring the knowledge of reality. Śaṅkara realized the absolute reality or the sphere of *Paramārtha* through the *Anubhūti* (intuition), whereas Kant proposes intellectual intuition as the means of attaining noumenon. Kant says that noumenon is “...an object of a non-sensible intuition, we thereby presuppose a special mode of

intuition namely, the intellectual¹.” But man can never possess this intellectual intuition; even he cannot grasp its possibility. Contrary to Kant, Śaṅkara says that “ultimate truth can be known and seen through *Aprokshānuhuti*.” *Anubhūti*, according to Śaṅkara, is a complete and adequate apprehension of reality. The man who knows reality by such an intuition becomes reality itself (*Brahma Veda Brahmaiva Bhavati*). It realizes the self in everything and everything in the self.

In the final section of the third chapter, namely, Reality in terms of *Sākṣin* and Self, I compare and contrast the nature and status of consciousness in terms of *Sākṣin* in Śaṅkara’s philosophy and Self in Kant’s philosophy. For Śaṅkara, *Sākṣin* is a witness consciousness and presents in all the levels of experiences. It is the logical presupposition of knowledge and experience. It illuminates all the objects presented to it. It is a pure subject but unknowable as an object. Similarly, Kant agrees with Śaṅkara. He also accepts that the unity of pure apperception or transcendental unity of self-consciousness is the pure subject and logical presupposition of the knowledge of objects. It unites the entire manifold which is given in perception. But Kant’s transcendental consciousness is not self-evident whereas, Śaṅkara’s self is self-evident (*Svatah-siddha*), as it is not established by extraneous proofs. It is not possible to deny the *Ātman*, because it is the very essence of the one who denies it. It is the base of all kinds of knowledge, presuppositions and proofs, but Kant cannot establish the Self or Atman of *Advaita* philosophy.

In my attempt to compare and contrast Śaṅkara with Kant, I wish to develop the position of reality which would be more inclusive, objective, comprehensive and elaborate. I am not simply going to develop a comparison and contrast between Śaṅkara and Kant by cataloguing their resemblances and differences on the status and nature of reality instead my attempt will be to depict the argument of Śaṅkara and Kant regarding reality and how they are supplemented by each other.

¹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans.by N.K.Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd.,1973, p. 268.

CHAPTER - I

Status of Reality in Śaṅkara's Philosophy

In the present chapter, I would like to discuss the nature and status of reality in Śaṅkara's philosophy within the framework of ontology/metaphysics and epistemology. In common parlance, the expression 'reality' is something which exists as a 'fact' or 'thing' without imagination or imitation. "Reality is often contrasted with imagination, delusion in the mind, dream, abstract or false knowledge. In a broader sense, it includes everything that exists"¹. In other words, reality means the totality of what is, as opposed to what merely seems to be. In philosophy, we address two different aspects of reality namely: 1. Ontological/Metaphysical aspect, which describes the nature of reality in terms of substance and existence; and 2. Epistemological aspect, which describes the nature of reality in terms of *Pramānās* (means of knowledge). There are three sources of Śaṅkara's philosophy, known as *Prasthānatrayi-Upniṣadas*, *Bhagavatgīta* and *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* in which reality is conceived as both (ontological\metaphysical and epistemological) frameworks. According to Śaṅkara, reality is *Satt*, *Vāstava*, *Yathārtha*, *Paramārtha*, *Paramapurūṣārtha*, *Ānanda*, *Jyāna*, *Anant*, *Bhūmā*, *Brahman*, *Ātman*, *Mokṣa*, *Turīya*, *Nity* and so on.

Historically, we can say that there are two traditions of philosophical thoughts which have exercised influence on Śaṅkara's philosophy. They are *Sāṅkhya* and *Mādhyaṃika sūnyavāda*. Śaṅkara derives the metaphysical principle of *Purūṣa*, *Mahata*, *Prāna*, *Ākāśa*, *Ahaṅkāra* etc. from *Sāṅkhya* philosophy. *Sāṅkhya* believes in the theory of evolution. This theory is based on *Sāṅkhya's* theory of causation, which is known as *Satkāryavāda*. It is opposite to the theory of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika's* *Asat-kāryavāda*. *Asat-kāryavāda* explicates that the effect is not contained in its cause and it is non-existent before creation. The effect is a new creation of its cause. In contrast, *Satkāryavāda* maintains that the effect is not a new creation but, only an explicit manifestation of that which was implicitly contained in its material cause. *Satkāryavāda* is divided further in

¹ www.wikipedia.org/wiki/reality, retrieved on 10.26.2011.

two categories *Parināmvāda* and *Vivartavāda*. Those who believe that the effect is a real transformation of its cause are known as *Parināmvādins*; while those who propose that it is only relatively real² (*Vyavahārika Satt*) manifestation, are called *Vivartavādins*. *Sāṅkhya* school of thought believes in the former but not the latter. Further, *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* and *Rāmānuja* have faith in *parināmvāda* but in a different manner. So there are two different interpretations of *Parināmvāda*: *Prakṛti-parināmvāda* and *Brahma-parināma-vāda*.

The view of *Sāṅkhya* is called *Prakṛti-parināmvāda-vāda* which means *Prakṛti* is a real conversion of its material effects, whereas, *Rāmānuja* accepts that all experienced world is the actual modification of *Brahman*, and this view is called *Brahma-parināmvāda*. Like *Sāṅkhya*, Śaṅkara too believes in *Satkāryavāda* and rejects the theory of *Asat-kāryavāda*. But, unlike *Sāṅkhya*, he supports the doctrine of *Vivartavāda*, which states that “this world is only relatively real. Just as snake is superimposed on the rope in twilight, this world and body are superimposed on *Brahman* or the Super Self. If you get knowledge of the rope, the illusion of snake in the rope will vanish. Even so, if you get knowledge of *Brahman*, the imperishable, the illusion of body and world will disappear.”³

“In *Vivartavāda*, the cause produces the effect without undergoing any change in itself. Snake is only an appearance on the rope. The rope has not transformed itself into a snake, like milk into curd. *Brahman* is immutable and eternal. Therefore, it cannot change itself into the world. *Brahman* becomes the cause of the world through *Māyā*, which is its inscrutable mysterious power or *Śakti*.”⁴ The cause produces the effect without undergoing any change in itself. Consequently, the world is only the appearance of *Brahman*; it has no independent existence apart from *Brahman*. *Brahman* appears as the world, and being the substratum of the world of appearance, it is a trans-figurative material cause.

² Singh, R.P., *Consciousness: Indian and Western Perspectives*, New Delhi, Atlantic Pub., 2008, p. 31.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Śaṅkara also admits the *Sāṅkhya*'s theory of evolution. According to *Sāṅkhya*, the efficient cause of the world is *Puruṣa* and the material cause is *Prakṛiti*. In evolution, *Prakṛiti* is transformed and differentiated into multiplicity of objects. Evolution is followed by dissolution. In dissolution, the physical existence, which means the worldly objects mingle back into *Prakṛiti*, which now remains as the undifferentiated and primordial substance. The evolution results in 23 different categories of objects. They comprise of three elements of *Āntaḥkaraṇas* or the internal organs, ten *Bāhyakaraṇas* or the external organs, five *Tanmātras* or subtle essences and five *Mahābhūtas* or gross elements.⁵

Antaḥkaraṇa is the inherent, innate tendencies of human being. Among the three *Antaḥkaraṇas*, *Mahat* (the cosmic mind) evolves as a result of preponderance of *sattva*. Since it is an evolute of *Prakṛiti*, it is made of matter. But it has psychological, intellectual aspect known as *buddhi* or intellect. The second evolute is *Ahaṁkāra* (ego). It arises out of the cosmic nature of *Mahat*. *Ahaṁkāra* is the self-sense. It is concerned with the self-identity and it brings awareness about "I" and "mine." According to *Sāṅkhya*, there emanates two arrays of objects from *ahaṁkāra*. The first set includes the *manas* (the third element of *Āntaḥkaraṇas*) and also ten *Bāhyakaraṇas* (which consists of the five sensory organs and the five motor organs). The second set consists of the ten elements which exist in two forms - subtle (five *Tanmātras*) and from the subtle elements evolves the gross elements (five *Mahābhūtas*).

Manas or mind which arises out of *Ahaṁkāra* is the subtle and central sense organ. So it can come into contact with several sense organs at the same time. However, according to the School of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, it is eternal and atomic and it cannot come into contact with several sense organs simultaneously. Contrary to the above thought, *Sāṅkhya*'s School of thought believes that *Manas* is neither eternal nor atomic. It also believes that *Manas* is 'made up of parts' and so it can come into contact with the different senses simultaneously. Śaṅkara accepts *Sāṅkhya*'s three elements of *Āntaḥkaraṇās* as it is, i.e., *Mahat*, *Ahaṁkāra* and *Manas*, but he bifurcates *Manas* into two divisions - *Manas* and *Citta*.

⁵ Raju, P.T., *Structural Depths of Indian Thought*, New Delhi, South Asian Pub., 1985, p. 308.

Besides *Manas*, the *Ahaṁkāra* also produces the five sensory and the five motor organs which are together called as *Bāhyakaraṇās*. The five sensory organs are sight, smell, taste, touch and sound. The five motor organs are speech, prehension, movement, excretion and reproduction.

The second array which arises out of *Ahaṁkāra* has ten elements categorized into two - *tanmātrās* and *mahābhūtas*. The five subtle elements - elemental sound, elemental touch, elemental colour, elemental taste and elemental smell - are called as *tanmātrās*. They are *śabḍa*, *sparsha*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gāṇḍha* respectively. The gross elements or *mahābhūtas* arise as a result of the combination of the subtle elements. The five gross elements are space or ether (*ākāśa*), water, air, fire and earth. Śaṅkara too accepts the aforementioned ten *Bāhyakaraṇās* and the *tanmātrās* and *mahābhūtas*. But he adheres to the theory of quintuplication (*pañcikaṛaṇa*), the process of mixing of coarse quintuple (*mahābhūta*).

On the question of creation, “All the *Vedāntists* agree on three points. They believe in God, in the *Vedas* as revealed, and in cycles. The belief about cycles is as follows: All matter throughout the universe is the outcome of one primal matter called *Ākāśha*; and force, whether gravitation, attraction or repulsion, or life, is the outcome of one primal force called *Prāṇa*. *Prāṇa* acting on *Ākāśha* is creating or projecting the universe. At the beginning of a cycle, *Ākāśha* is motionless, unmanifested. Then *Prāṇa* begins to act more and more, creating grosser and grosser and forms out *Ākāśha* - plants, animals, men, stars, and so on. After an incalculable time this evolution ceases and involution begins, everything being resolved back through finer and finer forms into the original *Ākāśha* and *Prāṇa*, when a new cycle follows. Now there is something beyond *Ākāśha* and *Prāṇa*. Both can be resolved into a third thing called *Mahat* - the Cosmic Mind. This Cosmic Mind does not create *Ākāśha* and *Prāṇa*, but changes itself into them.”⁶

As I have discussed, *Sāṅkhya* assumes two separate and independent realities i.e., *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is pure consciousness. *Puruṣa* is the soul, the self, the spirit,

⁶ Singh, R.P., *Consciousness: Indian and Western Perspectives*, New Delhi, Atlantic Pub., 2008, p. 13.

the subject and the knower. It is neither body nor senses nor brain nor mind (*manas*) nor ego (*ahankāra*) nor intellect (*buddhi*), it is self-luminous and self-proved. It is silent witness, *udāsīna*, postulate of knowledge, *akartā*, *kevala*, *sāksi*, *drastā*, *jñāta*. Likewise, Śaṅkara also says that *sāksi* is *akartā*, *kevala*, *sāksi*, *drastā*, *jñāta*, *niskriya* and *Ātma* is pure consciousness, self, spirit, subject, knower, self-luminous and self-proved but he repudiates its dualism and the concept of many self.

Further, he takes *Sāṅkhya's* concept of *Prakṛti* in a modified manner and transforms it into *Adhyāsa*. The world is a creation of *adhyāsa*. *Adhyāsa* is energized and acts as a medium of the projection of this world of plurality on the non-dual ground of *Brahman*. Like *Prakṛti*, *adhyāsa* is material and unconscious (*jadā*). Unlike *Prakṛti*, it is neither real nor independent. It is indescribable, beginningless, appearance and inherent potency of *Brahman*. It is *ananyā* form of *Brahman* and absolutely dependent on him. However, it can be removed through right knowledge.⁷

Further, Śaṅkara's philosophy is influenced by Nāgārjuna who makes the distinction between empirical truth (*Samvṛti-satya*) and absolute truth (*Paramārth-satya*). He says that "the teaching of the Buddha is based upon two kinds of truth, that is truth of the empirical world and truth of the ultimate reality. Those who do not understand the distinction between these two truths do not understand the profound truth embodied in the Buddha's message."⁸ *Samvṛti* means covering. It covers entirely the real nature of the objects and makes them something else. In this manner, we can say that the covering and projection are two aspects of *Samvṛti-satya*. Candrakīrti divides *Samvṛti* into two - *loka-samvṛti* and *Mithyā-samvṛti*. Śaṅkara also understood the reality in the same manner. According to Śaṅkara, the former corresponds with empirical truth (*Vyāvahārika-satt*) and the latter with imaginary truth (*Pratibhāsika-satt*). On the other hand, *Paramārtha* denotes the real nature of the things. It means *Samvṛti-satya* and *Paramārthika-satt* represents two different perspectives of the reality.

⁷ Sharma, C.D., *The Advaita Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Pub., 1996, pp. 172-3.

⁸ "Dve satye samupasṛtya buddhānām dharmadeśanā, lokasamvṛtisatyam ca satyam ca paramārthataḥ. ye nayorna vijānanti vibhāgam satyayordvayoḥ, te tattvaṁ na vijānanti gambhīram buddhasāsna." *The Philosophy of Middle Way*, trans. by David J. Kalupahana, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1998, pp. 133-333.

Epistemologically, these are the two levels of reality but ontologically, there is no difference between them. Whenever anything is looked at through thought form (*vikalpa*), it is *Samvṛti-satya* and whenever it is freed from super-imposed thought form (*niṛvikalpa*), it is the absolute. The difference between them is epistemological but not ontological. Even the same applies to the status of *Nirvāna*. Nāgārjuna says, “The life-process has nothing that distinguishes it from freedom (*Nirvāna*). Freedom has nothing that distinguishes it from the life process (*Saṁsarā*).”⁹

Nāgārjuna regards that there is no difference between the world and the absolute or *Nirvāna*. The *Saṁsarā* and *Nirvāna* are not identified at worldly (*Samvṛti*) level. The differences and degrees that are visible or created are because of *Samvṛti* whereas truth, from the standpoint of the *Paramārtha*, is one. To realize the *Paramārth-satt*, it is necessary to go through *Samvṛti-satya* because the *Paramārtha* can only be realized negatively by the removal of *Samvṛti*. This negation is the heart of the dialectic which gives rise to *Śūnyatā*. *Śūnyatā* is not only the negation of our views (*Dṛṣṭi*), but it is a spiritual experience (*Prajñā*) in itself and it is the non-relational knowledge of the Absolute and negative only for thought. It is not the denial of the reality but the freeing of the reality from artificial restriction.

Part-I

1.1. Ontological/Metaphysical Status of Reality

Etymologically, the word ontology is derived from the Greek noun “*onto*” and “*logia*,” which means the theory of being or reality. It is a branch of philosophy which is concerned with the nature, scope and relation of being. In other words, it seeks to analyze the question like what really exists in contrast with what merely appears to exist, what exists permanently in contrast with what exists only temporarily and what exists

⁹ *Na saṁsārasya nirvāna kiṁcidasti asti viśesanam, na nirvanasya saṁsāra kiṁcidasti asti viśesanam.*” *The Philosophy of Middle Way*, trans. by David J. Kalupahana, Delhi, Motilal Banarasiidass, 1998, pp. 136-337.

independently in contrast with what exists dependently and conditionally.¹⁰ Explains the nature of reality in terms of *Pañcakoṣas*¹¹ (five sheaths), namely: *Annamaya koṣa*, *Prānamaya koṣa*, *Manomaya koṣa*, *Vijñānmaya koṣa* and *Ānandamaya koṣa*. They cover the reality like a shell. These sheaths represent the five levels of reality or we can say that the evolution of reality.

Pancha Koṣa

<i>Anna-maya Koṣa</i>	Food-full	Gross Physical Body
<i>Prāna-maya Koṣa</i>	Energy-full	Subtle Body
<i>Mana-maya Koṣa</i>	Instinctive-mind-full	Perceptual Body
<i>Vigyāna-maya Koṣa</i>	Understanding-full	Consciousness Body
<i>Ānanda-maya Koṣa</i>	Bliss-full	Transcendental Body

Annamaya Koṣa

The first and lowest level of reality is known as matter or food-sheath (*Annamaya koṣa*). *Annamaya Koṣa* is related with physical existence and this becomes possible through the sustenance on the food. Śaṅkara says “our physical body is a product of matter. It constitutes the food-sheath. It exists because of food and dies without it.”¹² *Annamaya koṣa* is a reality because all beings that dwell on the earth are verily born from food. Moreover, by food alone they live. And they pass through with it till the end. Śaṅkara says that “food is the cause of all the other organisms beginning with those made of food, therefore all living beings originate from food, live on food, and amalgamate into food”¹³. Matter is unconscious and dead. Though matter is dead it cannot account for life, yet there can be no life without matter. The inorganic matter must

¹⁰Singh, R.P., *Kant and Hegel: Methodology, Ontology, Epistemology. Dialectic and Ought*, New Delhi, Galaxy Publications, 1990, p.1.

¹¹ *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, Chapter-2, trans. Śaṅkaracharya, Geeta Press, Gorakhpur, 2008, p. 62.

¹²“*Deho'yam annabhavāno annamayastu koṣaścānna jīvati vinaśyat tadvihiṅah. Tvakarma mānsa rūdhirāthipurīṣarasirṇayam svayam bhavitumarhati nityaśuddhaḥ.*” *Vivekachoodamani*, Śaṅkaracharya, trans. By Swami Gambhirananda Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, stanza 228, p.268.

¹³ “*Atho api jātā annenaiva jīvanti prāṇānādharaṇyanti vardhanta ityarthah. Athāpyenada annamāpiyantiyapi gacchanti.*” *Taittiriya Upanishad*, Śaṅkara's commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 202.

be transformed into organic life. Therefore, the second state of evolution is life or air (*Prānamaya koṣa*).

Prānamaya Koṣa

Prānamaya Koṣa is related with *Prāna*. The “Sanskrit word *prāna* originally meant breath, and since life depends on breath, it can also be used to indicate the life-principle. The word is now used to indicate the vitality of life”¹⁴. The *Annamaya koṣa* is entirely permeated by *prānamaya koṣa*. *Prānamaya koṣa* regarded as reality because it is considered as a consciousness of the physical body. Śaṅkara says “the *prāna* along with the five organs of action constitutes the vital-air-sheath, pervaded by which the food sheath performs all its activities as though it were living.”¹⁵ Again, he says, that deities carry out their activities by following the vital air. All men and animals that exist act likewise. The vital air is indeed with the life of all creatures. Therefore, it is said to be the life of all. Those who meditate on the vital air as *Brahman* attain the full span of life. Since the vital air is identical with all life. Of the physical body that precedes, this one, indeed, is the embodied self. Other than this vital body, there is an inner self made of mind, by which it is filled¹⁶. This level of reality is known as *Manomaya koṣa* (mental sheath).

Manomaya koṣa

Manas, “the inner organ, is different, and yet interactive with and dependent on the previous two treasures. It is confined to the gross body by governing the faculties of perception and instinctual consciousness”¹⁷. According to Śaṅkara, “*manas* is the inner

¹⁴ www.seraph.ie/panch%20kosha%20yogic%20psychology%2002-0.htm, retrieved on 12.17.2009.

¹⁵ “*Karmendriyaiḥ pañcabhirañcītoḥ prāno bhavetprānamayastu koṣaḥ. Yenātmavānanna mayoḥ anupūrṇaḥ pravartate asau sakalakriyāsu.*” *Vivekachoodamani*, Śaṅkaracharya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, stanza 165, p. 202.

¹⁶ “*prāna deva anuprānitam. manusyapasvascaī. prāno hi bhōtānamayu . tasmādsarvays muchate .sarvmev ta ayurānti ye prānam Brahmanhmopāsate .pranohibhutānāmayuh. tasmātsarvayumuchyate iti. tasyaish ev sharira atmā yḥ porvāsya.*” *Taittiriya Upanisad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, pp. 329-330.

¹⁷ www.seraph.ie/panch%20kosha%20yogic%20psychology%2002-0.htm, retrieved on 12.17.2009.

instrument of the imagination etc. That which has become one with mind is *Manomaya*.”¹⁸

All the ten senses (five *jyāna indriās* and five *karma indriās*) are controlled by mind, their functions are coordinated by mind and ultimately it conveys to *Buddhi* and *Buddhi* conveys to soul. Śaṅkara says “the organs of perception along with the mind form the mental-sheath which is the sole cause for the “I” and “mine” etc...It pervades the sheath preceding it-the vital-air-sheath.”¹⁹ According to *Advaita Vedānta*, mind is the cause of all kinds of plurality like, the plurality of names, qualities, activities, utilities and forms. In the dreaming state, the mind creates its own world. The mind itself is a cause of ignorance. According to Śaṅkara, in the dreaming state, even though there is no contact with the outside world, the mind projects the entire dream-universe of enjoyer etc. Similarly, the waking state is no different. All the world of pluralistic phenomena is nothing but a projection of the mind²⁰. Again Śaṅkara says “In the sound sleep, the mind is reduced to its causal-state and nothing perceivable exists as is proved by the universal experience of all people. Therefore, man’s world of change is just the creation of his own mind and has no objective reality.”²¹ This mind has another internal self, constituted by valid cognition. This level of reality is known as *Vijñānamaya* (intellectual-sheath).

Vijñānamaya koṣa

Vijñānamaya kosa is related with the consciousness. Awareness, alertness, activity and proper growth and integrated development are all the proper and nourishing aspects of the manifestation of the human consciousness. Human consciousness is referred in terms of the *Vijñānamaya koṣa*. *Vijñāna* is also related with the knowledge or more accurately knowledge of the reality. As much as one remains to be perfected into the realm of *Vijñānamaya koṣa* one enjoys nearness to the Reality. The trichotomy of

¹⁸“*Mana iti saṅkalpyāt makamantaḥkaraṇam tanmayo manomayo yathānnamayah.*” Ibid., 2.3.1., p. 33.

¹⁹“*Jñānendriyāṇi ca manaśca manomayah syāt koṣa mamāhamiti vastuvikalpahetuḥ. Sañjñādi bhedakalanākālito balīyāāmstatpūrvakoṣamabhipūrya vijrmbhatayah.*” *Vivekachoodamani*, Śaṅkaracharya, trans. by Swami chinmayanand, Bombay, Central Chinamaya Mission, 1999, stanza 167, p. 204.

²⁰“*Svapnearthaśūye srjati svaśaktyā bhoktrādiviśvam mana eva sarvam. Tattaiva jagratyapi no visesastatsarvamanaso vijrmbhanam.*” Ibid., Stanza 170, p. 207.

²¹“*suṣuptikāle manasi pralīne naivāsti kiñcitsakalaprasiddheḥ. Ato manaḥkalpita eva pūmsaḥ saṁsāra etasya na vastutoasti.*” Ibid., Stanza 171, p. 209.

knower, knowledge and known has been fused into it. Śaṅkara explains “it is without beginning, is of the nature of the ego and is called the *jīva*, which carries out the entire range of activities on the relative plane...The waking, dream and other states, and the experiences of joy and sorrow, belong to this intellectual sheath.”²² Of the preceding (mental) self, this (intellectual) self is verily the embodied self. This self (*Vijñānamaya kośa*), which exists within *Manomaya kośa* has another internal self i.e., bliss (*Ānandamaya kośa*).

Ānandamaya kośa

Ānandamaya kośa is the sheath related with the bliss or blissful existence. According to Śaṅkara, all the activities and business finally resolved or culminates in *Ānanda*. *Ānanda* is also equated with the *Brahman* or Supreme reality. Generally, the balanced, contented and unhindered life force and life energy generates happiness which is the basis for bliss existence. According to Śaṅkara, “*Ānanda* is an effect of meditation and rites, and *Ānandamaya* is constituted by that bliss. And this self is more internal than the cognitive self.”²³ Again he states “the *Ānandamaya kośa* is fully manifested in the deep-sleep. While in the dream and waking states, it is only partially manifest depending upon the sight of pleasing objects etc. This higher level of reality is also known as the level of *Brahman*.”²⁴ According to Śaṅkara, *Brahman* is that from which the world arises, into which it returns, and by which it is supported and it lives. *Brahman* is the Existence of all existence, the Truth of all truths, the Reality of all realities. All joys disappear into insignificance before the supreme joy of *Brahman*. Just as rivers, leaving their names and forms, and fuse into the ocean, so a wise man, arising above names and form, becomes one with the Absolute reality. He who knows *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*. Only by knowing it one can cross the ocean of birth and death. Now, I would like to explain and elaborate the metaphysical status of reality as *Brahman* in Śaṅkara’s philosophy.

²²“*Anādīkāloayamahāṃsvabhāvo jivah samastavyavahāravodā...Asyaiva vijñānamayasya jāgrat svapnādyavasthāḥ sukhaduḥkhabhogah.*” Ibid., Stanza171, p. 209.

²³ Śaṅkara’s commentary on *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, 2.5.1 in *Eight Upanisads: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, Vol.I, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., pp. 340-341.

²⁴ “*Ānandamayakośasya susuptau sphūrṭirūtkatā svapnajāgarayo rīṣadiṣṭasaṅdarśanādinā.*” Ibid., Stanza209, p. 246.

In metaphysics, Śaṅkara describes reality as *Brahman* in terms of *Sat*, *Cit*, *Ānanda*²⁵ and *Satya*, *Jñāna*, *Ananta*²⁶. Traditionally, in *Advaita* philosophy, *Brahman* has been understood as a supreme reality, supreme soul, absolute reality, ultimate and permanent reality, the highest being, the self, and so on. Originally, the expression *Brahman* is used in *Ṛig Veda* in close connection with various sacred utterances that were thought to have a special magical power. In other words, the term may have meant ‘spell’ or ‘prayer’, an utterance that was used for the magical attainment of worldly wisher and other worldly desire. Later, in the *Brāhmaṇagranthas*, *Brahman* comes to signify that which stands behind the gods as their ground and source, and in the *Upniṣads*, it becomes the unitary principle of all being, the cognition of which liberates one from finitude²⁷.

According to Śaṅkara, the Sanskrit word *Brahman* is derived from the root word ‘*Brh*’ which etymologically, means to grow, to expand, and to increase incessantly. It means that which grows unceasingly is called ‘*Brahman*’. In other words, it shows that the ultimate reality has no limit in its extensiveness. Śaṅkara defines *Brahman* is that which is the most extensive. He says ‘*BrahmttamatvatBrahman*’. Again he explains, “That indeed, that Self in its true nature, you know, as *Brahman* - (so called) because of its extensity (unsurpassability) - that which is all surpassing and is called *Bhūmā*, (great).”²⁸ There are several meanings of reality in terms of *Brahman*, for instance, *Annam Brahman*, *Śabdām Brahman*, *Rasam Brahman* etc. Where there is orderliness, purposiveness, motion or creation of some specific form, there is the hidden presence of *Brahman*. The awareness of the growth and the purposiveness etc., involves the existence of a conscious being or *Ātman*. The growth and the awareness of the growth cannot be separated. Hence, *Ātman* and *Brahman* are in perpetual unity. This has been the prime concern of Śaṅkara.

²⁵ *Bṛihad-āraṇyopniṣad*, Chapter-5, trans. by Śaṅkaraacharya, Gorakhpur, Geeta Press, 2010, pp. 110–125.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

²⁷ Deutsch, Eliot, *Advaita Vedanta: A philosophical Reconstruction*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, p. 9.

²⁸ “*Niratiśaya bhūmākhyam brhatvādBrahmanmyeti viddhi.*” *Kena Upniṣad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 54.

We know Śaṅkara regarded reality as *Brahman*. He says “*Brahman* does exist as a well-known entity, eternal, pure, intelligent, free by nature and all-knowing and all-powerful.”²⁹ Śaṅkara declares that *Brahman* can be apprehended under two forms. When the imperishable *Brahman* is described as without forms, sound, or touch, it is the *Nirguṇa* aspect of it; but for the sake of devotion the same may be described as *Sagūṇa*, as having all desires, actions, odors, and tastes. He says that, from the transcendental point of view, it is *Nirguṇa* and from the phenomenal point of view, it is *Sagūṇa*. Actually, when *Brahman* associates with its own power of *Māyā*, it is called *Sagūṇa Brahman*, who is referred as *Īsvara*. He says “*Brahman* is known in two aspects – one is possessed of the limiting adjunct constituted by the diversities of the universe which is a modification of name and form, and the other devoid of all conditioning factors and opposed to the earlier.”³⁰

For the accurate knowledge of an existent, it is essential to be aware of the methodology of characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*). According to Śaṅkara, there are two types of characteristics of *Sagūṇa Brahman*, namely, *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa* and *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*. Former distinguishes an existent from all other existent while latter indicates the essential nature of existent. To define the status of *Brahman* Śaṅkara has embraced both the methods. Through the method of *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*, he describes *Brahman* as the cause of the creation, preservation and dissolution of this universe. He says that “from which all these beings take birth, that by which they live after being born, that towards which they move and into which they merge. That is *Brahman*.”³¹ *Brahman* is the material and efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*) of the universe. There can be no other cause except *Aparā Brahman* or *Īsvara*. Śaṅkara declares that *Brahman* is not “dependent on any other cause ...for it is by nature eternal ...*Brahman* is surpassingly subtle, there is

²⁹“*Asti tāvad Brahma nityaśudhamuktasvabhāvam*” Brahma-sutra-Bhasya of Śaṅkaracharya, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Adwaita Ashrama, Kolkata, 1999, p. 11.

³⁰ “*Dvirūpam hi Brahmāvagamyate nāmarūpavikārābhedopadhiviśistam tad viparitam ca sarvopadhivivarjitam*” Ibid., p. 64.

³¹“*Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante. Yena jātāni jīvanti. Yatprayantya bhisaṃviśanti. Tadvijīñāsasva tad Brahmēti*” *Taittiriya Upaniśad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upaniśad: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 391.

nothing else whether subtle or screened or remote or past, present or future which can be unknowable to it. Therefore, *Brahman* is omniscient.”³²

Śaṅkara also explains the metaphysical status of reality as *Brahman* through the method of *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*. He has characterised *Satya*, *Jñāna*, *Ananta* and *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ānanda* as a *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of *Brahman*. First of all, I would like to discuss the status of reality in terms of *Satya* (truth), *Jñāna* (knowledge), and *Ananta* (infinite).

The *Taittirīya* mantra 2.1.1 – “*Satyam, Jñānam, Anantam Brahma*” reveals the nature of *Brahman* in a nutshell. Śaṅkara says that these words could be treated as indicating the attributes of *Brahman*. In the ordinary usage of language, the attributes help as to distinguish one thing from another. But *Brahman* is not to be understood as a thing to be distinguished from other things by qualities; it is the only all-inclusive Truth. Thus it is neither necessary nor possible to know *Brahman*, as distinguished from other entities. *Brahman* cannot be known as something qualified by any attribute, because it is attribute-less in itself.

Śaṅkara explains that these attributes are not to be understood as related directly to *Brahman*, as qualities are to a thing qualified. They have only an indirect denotative function. Also these attributes are not interrelated. But they are related indirectly to reality as *Brahman* and show his characteristics. Śaṅkara argues, “the word *Satya*’ etc. is unrelated among themselves, since they sub serve something else: they are meant to be applied to the substantive only. Accordingly, each of the...word is related with the word *Brahman*, independently of the other, thus: *Satyam Brahma, Jñānam Brahma, Anantam Brahma*.”³³

Reality is *Brahman* in terms of *Satya*. Śaṅkara says “As for *Satya*, a thing is said to be *Satya*, true, when it does not change the nature that is ascertained to be its own; and a thing is said to be unreal when it changes the nature that is ascertained to be its own. Hence a mutable thing (*vikāra*) is unreal ...So the phrase *Satyam Brahma* distinguishes

³²“...na tatkāraṇāntarasavyapeksam. Nityasvarūpatvāt. Na tasyānyadavijñeyam sūkṣm vyavahitam viprakṛstam bhūtam bhavabhviṣyadvaāsti”, Ibid., 2.1.1., p. 314.

³³ *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 304.

Brahman from mutable things.”³⁴ The word, ‘*Jñānam*’ means knowledge, consciousness, and cognition. According to Śaṅkara, the knowledge of the cause of the phenomenal world is *Jñānam* and *Brahman* is the material cause of the universe.³⁵ Śaṅkara says, *Brahman* is the material cause (of all subsequent changes) and since a material cause is a substance, it can be an accessory as well, thereby becoming insentient like earth. Hence, it is said that *Brahman* is *Jñānam*. *Jñāna* means knowledge consciousness. The word *Jñāna* conveys the abstract notion of the verb ...along with truth and infinitude.” Expanding the word *Brahman* as infinite, Śaṅkara says, “From the phrase *Jñānam Brahman*, it may follow that *Brahman* is limited, for human knowledge is seen to be finite. Hence, in order to obviate this, the text says, *Anantam*, infinite.”³⁶

Śaṅkara defines *Brahman*’s another essential nature as *Satt, Citt and Ānanda*. *Brahman* in *Advaita Vedanta* is called *Satchittānanda*, or *Satt-Chitt-Ānand*. *Satt* means existence, *Chit* means consciousness and *Ānand* means bliss or ecstasy. *Brahman* is considered to have all these three qualities because these are the three qualities in which *Brahman* is manifested in this world. The world exists in these three dimensions. They are like three strands of a rope which combines to form the rope. *Satt* is the quality of existence, the material existence of this world. *Brahman* lies at the base of all the material non-conscious objects in this world and sustains the material existence of the world.

Chitt is the quality of consciousness. Consciousness in *Advaita Vedanta* is a dimension of existence of the world. It is inextricably combined with the material existence, yet it is a different dimension of existence and remains separate from material existence, like the strands of a rope. Regarding the status of reality as *Brahman*, Śaṅkara says, “*prajñā* is consciousness that is the same as *Brahman*...therefore consciousness is

³⁴“*Satyamiti yadrūpeṇa yanniścitaṁ tadrūpaṁ na vyabhicarati tatsatyam. Yadrūpeṇa niścitaṁ yattadrūpaṁ vyabhicaradanṛtamityucyate. Ato vikāroanṛtam...evam sadeva satyamityavadhāraṇāt. Ataḥ satyam Brahmanhmeti Brahmanhman vikārānnivartayati.*”, Ibid., 2.1.1., pp. 308-309.

³⁵ “*karaṇatvaṁ prāptaṁ Brahmaṇaḥ kāraṇasya ca kārakatvaṁ vastutvānṛdvadacidrūpatā ca prāptāta idamucyate jñānaṁ Brahmeti. Ārāājñānaṁ jñaptiravabodhaḥ; bhāvasādhanō jñānaśabdo na tu jñānakartṛ Brahmaviśeṣaṇatvātsatyānantabhyām sah.*” Ibid., 2.1.1., pp. 308-309.

³⁶ “*evam ātmānātmanoḥ ubhayoḥ api dr̥ṣṭ upalabhadhaḥ anto nirṇayaḥ sad sat eva iti tu anayoḥ yathoktayoḥ tatvadar̥śibhiḥ.*” *The Bhagavad Gita: Commentary of Śaṅkaracharya*, trans by A, Mahadeva Sastri, Madras, V. Rama swami and sons, 1961, p. 30.

Brahman.³⁷ Consciousness is self-revealing and is not dependent on any other factor for the revelation of itself or of any other. Again, he says, “consciousness is the support (*pratiṣṭhā*) of the whole universe.”³⁸

Ānand is the quality of bliss or ecstasy, which forms the third strand. This is said to be the purest state of existence of *Brahman* and is a part of *Advaita* metaphysics. The characteristic of reality as *Brahman*, in terms of *Ānanda*, is based on his argument that the “Bliss, which is the highest reality, and which consists in the realization of the Truth, that is the self, is located in one’s own self (*svastham*); quiescent(*śāntam*), characterized by the absence of all evil (*sanirvāṇam*), coexistent with cessation, i.e., liberation; and it is indescribable (*akathyam*), as it relates to an absolutely unique entity; it is the highest happiness(*uttamam sukham*). It is unsurpassable and open to the vision of the Yogis alone. It is unborn (*ajanmā*), unlike objective happiness. And since this happiness, in its true nature of omniscient, is identical with the unborn (*ajanmā*); (with the) thing to be known (*jñeyena*); therefore the knower of *Brahman* (*Paricakṣate*) call it; the omniscient one, *Brahman* itself.”³⁹

Here, we can say that the characteristics of *Brahman* as *Satt*, *Citt*, and *Ānanda* is defined positively but it is not final. Primarily, *Brahman* is inexpressible because ultimately it is beyond our senses, thought and language. Śaṅkara says “*Brahman* is beyond speech and mind; it cannot be classed with object of knowledge.”⁴⁰ Therefore, negative explanation reveals *Brahman* as attribute less. *Neti-Neti* does not negate *Brahman*, but negates only the characteristics of *Brahman* which is ascribed by thought. By negating all description of *Brahman*, it reveals *Brahman* as Ultimate reality. In this

³⁷ “*Pratijñaptiḥ prajñā tacca Brahmaiva...tasmāt prajñānaṁ Brahma*” Aittiriya Upniansad, Samkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eigth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 68.

³⁸ “*Lokaḥ prajñā pratiṣṭhāsarvasya jagataḥ*,” Ibid., p. 68.

³⁹ “*yathoktaṁ paramārthsukhamasatyānubodhalakṣaṇaṁ svastham svātmani sthitam, śāntam sarvānarthopaśamarūpam, sanirvāṇam nirvrtinirvāṇamkaivālyam saha nirvāṇena vartate, taccākathyam na śakyate kathayayitum, atyantāsādhāraṇaviṣayatvāt; sukhamuttam nirvanena vartate, tadyogipratyakṣameva. Na jāmyajam yathā visayavisayam. Ajenānutpannena jñeyenāvvyatiriktam satsvena sarvajñārupeṣa sarvajñam Brahmaiva sukham paricakṣate kathayani Brahmadevaḥ.*” *Mundko Upniansad*, Samkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eigth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, pp. 319-320.

⁴⁰ *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya*, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, 3.2.22, p. 625.

regard, Śaṅkara says, “Since there is surely nothing besides this *Brahman*, therefore *Brahman* is called ‘Not So, Not So.’ It does not mean that *Brahman* itself does not exist... because there is no other (and more appropriate) description than this, therefore it is called ‘Not So, Not So’.”⁴¹

Nirguṇa Brahman, according to Śaṅkara, is devoid of all attributes and all categories of intellect (*niṛvīśeska*). It is that transcendent indeterminate state of being about which ultimately nothing can be affirmed. He calls it ‘*Paramārtha-satya*’, *Nityam*, (eternal), *Sarvagatam* (all pervasive), *Bhūmā*. It is strictly one, unchangeable, without part and name, immutable, invisible and formless. Śaṅkara says, “That which is described as soundless, touchless, colourless, undiminishing and also tasteless, eternal—that is the undecaying *Brahman*. That which is possessed of sound etc., diminishes. But this one, being soundless etc. does not diminish, does not decay; and because of this, it is eternal. Whatever decays is non-eternal; but this one does not decay, therefore it is permanent. For this further reason, too, it is eternal; that which has no cause or beginning is beginning less (*Anādi*). That which has a cause, is impermanent, because it is an effect and it merges into its cause, as for instance earth etc. but this one being the cause of all, is not the effect; and because It is not an effect, It is eternal; It has no cause into which It can merge.”⁴² Further he says that *Nirguṇa Brahman* is “all-pervasive, like space...pure, bright, i.e., resplendent... taintless, devoid of the dirt of ignorance...self-existent.”⁴³

When this *Nirguṇa Brahman* associated with its potency *Māyā*, *Brahman* appears as the *saguṇa* or *Īśvara*. He is also known as *Aparā Brahman*. *Īśvara* is said to be the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe. He is the creator, preserver and

⁴¹ “*Na nāmānbhidhīyate Brahmanhma rūpyate vā na kenacitprakāreṇetyanāmakamarūpakam*” *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Adwaita Ashrama, Kolkata, 1999, p. 309.

⁴² “*Aśabdamaśparśamarūpamavyayam tathārasam nityamagandhavacca yad etadvyākhyātam Brahmanāhmvayayam yadhi śabdādimattadvētidam tu aśabdādimattavādavyayam na vyeti na kṣīyate, ata eva ca nityam yadhi vyeti tadanityamidam tu na vyetyato nityam. Itaśca nityam anādyavidyamāna ādih kāraṇam asya tadidamanādi. Yadhdayādimattakāryatvādanityam kāraṇa kāraṇe parliyate yathā yasminpraliyeta.*” *Katta Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 177.

⁴³ “*sukram śuddham jyotiśmaddīptimānityarthah. Akāyamaśarīro liṅgaśarīravarjīttaityarthah...śuddham nirmalamavidyāmalarahitamiti...svayambhūh svayameva bhavātī*” *Isa Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 17.

destroyer of this world which is his appearance. The cause from which proceeds the origin, subsistence and dissolution of the world, which is made up of name and forms, subjects and objects, cause and effect and space and time; a world which is formed after an arrangement of an inconceivable omnipotent cause is *Īsvara*. He is the supreme spirit, knowing all and possessed of all power. He is the object of devotion and the inspirer of moral life. He is real but becomes unreal only for him who realized his oneness with *Brahman* by rising above speech and mind.

Regarding the creation of world, *Advaita vedanta* accepts the theory of *pañcīkaraṇa*. It is the process of mixing of coarse quintuple (*mahābhūta*). In this process, *Īsvara* created ether, air, fire, water, and earth in due succession. *Ākāśa* is one, infinite, imponderable, inert, and all-pervasive.⁴⁴ Air is generated from the ether; fire from air; water from fire; and earth from water.⁴⁵ Śaṅkara recognizes the distinction between the subtle elements (*tanmātras*) and the gross elements (*mahābhūta*) like *Sāṅkhya*. The *Upaniṣads* mention the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*).

From *Māyā* of *Īsvara*, the matrix of unmanifest (*avyākṛta*) names and forms, is generated the subtle essence of sound (*śabdatanmātre*). It is the subtle element of ether. Ether has the quality of sound only. The subtle element of air is generated from ether. Its essence is touch. The subtle element of fire is generated from ether and air. Its essence is colour. The subtle element of water is generated from ether, air and fire. Its essence is taste. The subtle element of earth is generated from ether, air, fire and water. Its essence is smell. Ether has sound. Air has sound and touch. Fire has sound, touch, and colour. Water has taste in addition to these. Earth has smell in addition to all these qualities.

Gross elements are generated from the subtle elements by quintuplication (*pañcīkaraṇa*). Each subtle element is divided into two halves. One half is the subtle element itself. The other half is divided into four equal parts which are one of each remaining subtle elements. The first half of a subtle element is combined with the four equal parts of each of the other elements, and thus a gross element is produced.

⁴⁴ Shankaracharya, *Pañcīkaranavārtika*, Gorakhpur, Geeta Press, 1999, pp. 143.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

1. Gross ether = 1/2 ether essence (*tanmātra*) + 1/8 air essence + 1/8 fire essence + 1/8 water essence + 1/8 earth essence.
2. Gross air = 1/2 air essence + 1/8 ether essence + 1/8 fire essence + 1/8 water essence + 1/8 earth essence.
3. Gross water = 1/2 water essence + 1/8 ether essence + 1/8 air essence + 1/8 fire essence + 1/8 earth essence
4. Gross fire = 1/2 fire essence + 1/8 air essence + 1/8 water essence + 1/8 ether essence + 1/8 earth essence.
5. Gross earth = 1/2 earth essence + 1/8 ether essence + 1/8 air essence + 1/8 fire essence + 1/8 water essence.⁴⁶

Śaṅkara also recognizes triplication (*trivṛtkaraṇa*). It is the combination of the three subtle essences of earth, water, and fire. Ether and air cannot combine with the other elements.⁴⁷ Thus, the combinations of three subtle essences are as follows:

1. Gross fire = 1/2 fire essence + 1/4 water essence + 1/4 earth essence.
2. Gross water = 1/2 water essence + 1/4 fire essence + 1/4 earth essence.
3. Gross earth = 1/2 fire essence + 1/4 water essence + 1/4 earth essence.

Thus the gross elements (*mahābhūta*) are the compounds of the subtle elements (*sūkṣmabhūta*). Gross ether has manifest sound; gross air has sound and touch; gross fire has sound, touch, heat and light; gross water has taste in addition to sound, touch heat and light. These gross elements produce the different kinds of substances by transformation (*parināma*).⁴⁸ “Matter is constantly undergoing change of state. The gross elements produce compounds which possess like qualities with the constituents; or they produce compounds, which possess unlike qualities.”⁴⁹

The cosmic system consisting of the fourteen worlds is composed of the gross elements with the excess of *tamas* in various forms of integration and disintegration.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 356-362.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 365.

⁴⁸ Hirianna, M., *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Rajpal & Sons, 1999, p. 89.

⁴⁹ Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Rajpal & Sons, 1999, p. 217.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 219.

Īsvara himself creates the subtle and gross elements out of his *Māya* by volition. In dissolution, earth becomes water; water becomes fire; fire becomes air; air becomes ākasa; and ākasa is reabsorbed in *Īsvara*'s *Māya*. Śaṅkara states that the world is non-different from *Īsvara*. It exists in an effect state (*kāryāvasthā*) after creation. It exists in a causal state (*kāraṇāvasthā*) after dissolution.

Śaṅkara does not deny the reality of *Saguṇa Brahman* but he believes in the ultimate reality of *Nirguṇa Brahman*. In his opinion, *Īsvara* is relative to the limiting adjuncts of name and form. He writes "...the lord's being a lord, his omniscience, his omnipotence, etc. all depend on the limitation due to the adjuncts whose self is Nescience, while in reality none of these qualities belong to the self whose true nature is cleared by right knowledge from all adjuncts whatsoever". *Īsvara* is not the highest reality. However, he is the best image of the truth possible under our present conditions of knowledge. But when one has received the true knowledge and attained the unqualified *Brahman*, *Īsvara* ceases to be.

Thus, according to Śaṅkara, three levels of reality exist – the first level is the transcendental or the *Pāramārthika* level in which *Brahman* is the only reality. "*ekameva hi paramātha satyam Brahma.*" Means the absolute truth is only one, which is *Brahma*.⁵¹ It is beyond our thoughts, senses, language and empirical experience. Śaṅkara says "The content of knowledge is said to be the most real, since it ever remain the same and in the knowledge of that kind is said to be right knowledge (*Samyak-jñāna*)."⁵² *Pāramārthika* is "the cessation of all empirical dealing in the state of the Highest Reality."⁵³

The second level of reality is the pragmatic or the *Vyāvahārika* level, in which both *jiva* (living creatures or individual souls) and *Īsvara* are true. Here, the material world is also true, but not real in itself. Śaṅkara says, "An object...which exists because

⁵¹ *Taittiriya Upanianisad*, Śaṅkara's commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, 2.6.1, p. 358.

⁵² "*ekarupena hyavasthito yarthah sa paramarthah loke tadvisayam jnanam samyagjnanmityucyate.*" *Taittiriya Upanianisad*, Śaṅkara's commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 358.

⁵³ "*Paramarthavasthayam sarvavyavaharabhavam vadanti vedantah sarve.*" *Ibid.*, 2,1,14, p. 334.

of a fancied empirical outlook (i.e., on the strength of empirical experience) - it being called so because it is an empirical outlook (*samvṛti*) that is imagined (*kaipita*) as a means for the attainment of the highest object; anything that exists by virtue of this, that has no existence, from the standpoint of the Absolut Reality.”⁵⁴

Third and the last level is the apparent or the *Prāthibhāsika* level, in which material world reality is actually false, like illusion of a snake over a rope or a dream. This is the level of imaginary world. The imaginary object and the knowledge of imaginary object are not the same level. The object of imaginary level is false but its knowledge and ground is not false.

Śaṅkara also describes the status of consciousness as reality in terms of *Avasthātraya*, i.e., *jāgrat*, *svapna* and *suṣupti*. This could be considered as psychological framework. Related with these three stages of consciousness, there is the problem of intentionality and self-consciousness. *Ramānuja*, one of the *Vedāntins*, regards these three stages as double intentional: on the one hand, it is intentional towards the subject; on the other it is intentional towards the objects. But the other *Vedāntins*, including Śaṅkara, believe that consciousness by its nature is not intentional, but it becomes intentional because of its association with the mind. According to *Advaita* philosophy, “the self or consciousness, which is one, is pervasive in all the three stages of experience, for the purpose of analysis, designates it as *Viśva* in the waking state, as *Taijasa* in the dream state and *Prājña* in the sleep state.”⁵⁵ For instance, the same person is called head of the family, chairperson of the department and supervisor of a research team depending on his status in different contexts, even so one and the same consciousness is called by three different names in three different situations.

⁵⁴ “*Yah padarthah...sa kalpitasamvṛtya; kalpita ca sa paramarthapattyupayatvena samvṛtisca sa, taya yoasti paramarthena nastyasau na vidyate.*” *Mandukya Karika Śaṅkara’s commentary*, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 379.

⁵⁵ *Mandukya Karika*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, Vol.II, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, p. 191-192.

Jāgrat Avasthā (waking State)

Consciousness in our waking experience is always consciousness of something. When we reflect on our consciousness, we know it to be intentional as the consciousness of this or that object. The intended object, in this state, may be physical like, chair, table, and tree existing in the external world. Or it may be one's own subjective state like pleasure or pain. Shortly, *Viśva* (waking - Consciousness) is intentional. The mind and the sense, with function in this state, are the instruments through which *Viśva* experiences all kinds of external "gross" objects. It is "*Bahiṣ-prejñah*."⁵⁶

Svapna Avasthā (dreaming State)

In dreaming state, though the senses do not function, the mind function as a result of which consciousness becomes intentional. The objects perceived in dreams are revival of impressions received in waking state and have an external reality only to the dreamer. When modified by the impressions which the external objects have left, the *Jiva* sees dreams. Perception takes place through the internal organ called *Manas*, so it is called "inner perception." This is also known as *Taijas*⁵⁷ (internal objects)

Sushupti Avasthā (deep sleep state)

In *Sushupti*, a person does not experience any object, external or internal, gross or subtle. In other words, you have a cessation of empirical consciousness. There is no play of the mind in this *Avasthā* (state). There is neither *Rāga nor Dvesha* (attraction or repulsion, like or dislike). The mind gets *Laya* into its cause. *Manolaya* (involution of the mind) takes place. There is no play of the *Indriyas* (organs, senses) too. Consciousness in this state is called "*Prajñā*."⁵⁸

From the above explanation, Consciousness is uniformly present in all the three states of experience. The body and the senses are present in the waking level, but these are absent in the dream level, even the mind is absent at the deep sleep level, but Consciousness is present at all the three levels of experience. Consciousness is the

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 185.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 185.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 185.

witness of all the three occurrences. Śaṅkara designate this Consciousness as *Sākṣin* who is the witness self. *Sākṣin* is the logical presupposition of knowledge. It is logical because knowledge between the stage of pre-sleep and post-sleep is associated by *Sākṣin*. If we cannot accept the witness self in these levels, we would not have any logical ground who associate the knowledge between pre-sleep and post-sleep so that when we awake, we feel enjoy sleeping. On this ground, we can conclude that *Sākṣin* is the witness self-presents in deep sleep level like waking and dreaming stage. Śaṅkara says “Beyond all the fluctuations, beyond all the physical and psychical condition... The self maintains our identity.”⁵⁹ *Sākṣin* is always existing and unchanging entity. In this manner, it is considered as reality.

Śaṅkara accepts reality in terms of *Sākṣin*. It is pure eternal Consciousness, self-luminous, self-proved and the presupposition of all knowledge and experience. It is witness self, a disinterested looker-on illuminating itself and everything presented to it as an object. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* explains that “two birds that are ever associated and have similar names cling to the same tree. Of these, one eats the fruit of divergent tastes and the other looks on without eating.”⁶⁰ Here, the looker bird is *Sākṣin*. It is the witness of knowledge, pure subject, and a disinterested observer.

As described above, that the *Sākṣin* is the witness of all the three involvements of the Consciousness. This Consciousness as such cannot be known under the knowledge-situation just as tongue cannot taste itself. This is the fourth state, the nameless, i.e. *Turīya*. It is the state of trans-empirical, trans-rational, and trans-linguistic. There is no other than anything outside, no other than anything inside, is the way that *Turīya* state is described. At this state, *Ātman* is to be entirely identified with the *Brahman*. In other words, if I am the *Ātman* and *Ātman* is ultimate reality then, it follows syllogistically, that I am the ultimate reality. I am *Brahman*. *Aham Brahmāsmi*.

Śaṅkara supports the *Jivan-mukti* in term of reality. In *Advaita Vedanta*, *avidyā* is the cause of our worldly bondage (*bandhann*). It is *avidyā* that causes *Jīva* to identify

⁵⁹ Swami Satprakashanand, *Vedanta for All*, Chennai, Sri Ramkrishna Math, 2001, p. 227.

⁶⁰ *Mandukya Karika*, , Śaṅkara’s commentary, Vol.II, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 1999, 3.1.1., p. 137.

himself with the non-self (*anātma*). When he comes out of the worldly bondage, he realizes his true nature and is liberated from all the pangs of evils and sufferings. It is the stage which *Advaita* calls as reality in terms of *Mokṣa* or *Jīvan-Mukti*. Śaṅkara explains reality in terms of *Mukti* as “this one is all-pervasive like space, devoid of all modifications, ever content, partless, and self-effulgent by nature. This is that unembodiedness, called liberation, where the idea of the three periods of time does not exist and virtuous and vicious deeds cease along with their effects.”⁶¹ In *Advaita* tradition, *Brahman*, *Ātman*, *Jñāna*, *Paramārtha* and *Mokṣa* are identical term. *Mokṣa* is the immediate experience of the real nature of the Self. It is Absolute and eternal freedom. Śaṅkara identifies *Mokṣa* with *Brahman* and it is taken as a reality. He says, “Anyone, who in this world, knows that supreme *Brahman* becomes *Brahman* indeed.”⁶² In this manner, one can say that *Brahman* cannot be known by finites thought as an object, but is to be experienced directly by realizing one’s unity with him. Śaṅkara explicates three characteristics of *Mokṣa* which really has the same meaning:

1. *Mokṣa* is the realization of *Brahman*. Precisely, liberation is the state of identity with *Brahman*.⁶³
2. *Mokṣa* is the removal of *avidyā*.⁶⁴
3. *Mokṣa* is eternal “unembodiedness.”⁶⁵

Realization of *Brahman* and removal of *avidyā* are the same, for both reveal the Absolute as eternal consciousness and bliss. Unembodiedness means the utter

⁶¹ *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Advaita Ashram, 1999, 1.1.4, p. 69.

⁶² *Mandukya Karika*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, Vo.II, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upanisada: with the Commentary of Sankaracharya*, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 1999, 3.2.9., p. 163.

⁶³ *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 1999, 1.1.4, p. 34.

⁶⁴ *Brahmāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, trans. by Swami Madhavanand, Calcutta, Advaita Ashram, 1984, 4.4.6, p. 38.

⁶⁵ *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 1999, 1.1.4, p. 28.

unrelatedness of the self with the three types of bodies - gross, subtle and causal.⁶⁶ It is not the absence of the body but the absence of the relationship with the body.

For achieving *Mokṣa*, Śaṅkara describes four types of actions, which is called “*Sādhana-catustaya*.” These are:

1. *Nityānitya vastuviveka* - eligibility of discrimination between the eternal and non-eternal substances.
2. *Ihmutrātha phala bogavirāga* - dispassion for the enjoyment of the fruits (of work) here and hereafter
3. *Samadamādi sādhanā sampat* - a perfection of such practices as control of mind, control of the senses and organs etc.
4. *Mumuksutvaṁ* - hankering for *Mokṣa*.

However, these four *Sādhana*s are not sufficient for attaining *Mokṣa*. It is necessary to follow the “triple discipline” through which we realize our final destination of life as *Jivan-Mukti*. These are:

1. *Sravaṇa*, which means a serious and sustained study of *Vedānta* text through hearing or reading.
2. *Manana*, which means critical exposition what has been heard or read.
3. *Nididhyāsana*, which means long, constant and continuous meditation.

From the above analysis, we can understand the nuances of expositions of Śaṅkara and other Schools of thought. The discourse on the status of reality in Śaṅkara’s philosophy helps us to bring out the innate differences in various concepts and also it clearly explains how Śaṅkara differs from other philosophers or Schools. By drawing influences from his predecessors, Śaṅkara explains reality in various terms. In order to provide a clear perception of Śaṅkara’s status of reality, it is also necessary to discuss his epistemological status of reality. Now, I shall describe the status of reality as *Pramāṇās* within the epistemological framework.

⁶⁶ *Talks on Śaṅkara’s Vivekachoodāmani*, trans. by Swami Chinmayananda, Vol.II, Madras, chinmaya Publications, 1999, Stanza 72-75, pp. 96-100.

Part-II

1.2. Epistemological status of reality - *Pramāna vyavasthā*

Epistemology or knowledge theory is concerned with analysis and evaluation of nature and scope of knowledge. In other words, it addresses the issues regarding the possibilities and limitations of knowledge. Precisely, it seeks to analyze the questions like – What is knowledge? How do we acquire knowledge? And what are the means of acquiring it? These ‘means of knowledge’ are called *Prāmānas*. “*Pramāna* is a technical term of *Veda*. It implies three things – *apūrva*, *abādhitā* and *svatantra*. Every *pramāna* is *apūrva* which means unique in its own field. What is known by eyes cannot be known by any other means. *Pramāna* also implies *abadhita* which means the knowledge gained by eyes cannot be negated by any other means and the last is *svatantra* which means to know its own object it does not depend upon any other means of knowledge. This is true for all means of knowledge.”⁶⁷

According to Śaṅkara, the world of absolute Reality is known through the function of *prāmāna* and further, he adds, the existence and nonexistence of a thing can only be established by means of *pramāna*. “Knowledge arises from its valid means; and the valid means apprehend the things just as they are.”⁶⁸

There are six means of knowledge in *vedāntic* system of knowledge. These six means of knowledge are *Pratyakṣha* (Perception), *Anumāna* (Inference), *Upamāna* (Comparison), *Arthāpatti* (Postulation), *Anupalabdhi* (Non-apprehension), and *Śabda* (Verbal Testimony). These are the six valid means of knowledge available to us, and we consciously or unconsciously use them in our day to day life to ‘know’ various things which comes on our way. Before I come to the *prāmanās*, I will discuss *pramānavyavsthā*.

In the sutra, Śaṅkara says, “How we decide that something is and something is not. If the world is proved by all the *pramānas*, we cannot say that it does not exist. But

⁶⁷ [www.advaita-academy.org/vedanta-pramana the-Ultimate Means](http://www.advaita-academy.org/vedanta-pramana-the-Ultimate-Means), retrieved on 1.8.2012.

⁶⁸ “*Jnanam tu pramānājanīyam pramāṇam ca yathābhūtavastavastuvisayam*,” *Brahma-sūtra-Bhāṣya* of Śaṅkarācharya, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, 1.i.4., p. 34.

there is *pramāṇvyvsthā*, on the basis of *pramāṇvyvsthā*, every *pramāṇa* operates in a particular area, and it has its own subject matter.”⁶⁹ This *pramāṇvyvsthā* is related to *antaḥkaraṇa*. *Antaḥkaraṇa* receive and arrange what is conveyed to it through the senses. It is inherent, innate and fundamental tendencies of human being. Through the function of the *antaḥkaraṇa* and its modification, i.e. *vrttijñāna*, we move from the sphere of appearance towards the sphere of reality. It makes possible for a person to come in contact with the world around him, i.e. *vyāvahārika jagat*.

Śaṅkara undertakes to enumerate the different faculties of our personality that together constitute the subtle body. These faculties, in their aggregate, express through the gross body and establish the individual’s contact with the world of objects around from where he gains his own experiences of the world. Śaṅkara points out the five organs of knowledge (*jñānendriya*) and the five organs of action (*karmendriya*) to perceive the stimuli (*viśhaya*) reaching us and to respond to them, together they constitute the expression of life through us. The inlets that allow the stimuli to reach us are called the organs of knowledge because they perceive the world around us. These, the sense organs, are the ears, skin, eyes, nose and tongue.

When the knowledge of objects is received, we respond to them through our motor-organs of action - the hands, the legs, the anus and the genital organ. Since these are the points at which the individual explodes into action while expressing his responses, they are called the organs of function or action. Śaṅkara says “the ears, skin, eyes, nose and tongue are organs of knowledge, for they help us [to] gain knowledge of objects (*vishayas*). The organ of speech, hands, legs, the anus and genital organ are the organs of action since they have a tendency for work.”⁷⁰

After the description of the instruments of perception and action, we logically proceed to the subtle factors that constitute the internal organs (*antaḥkaraṇa*). They are four fold - *Manas, Buddhi, Ahaṅkara and Citta*.

⁶⁹ Singh, R.P., *Consciousness: Indian and Western Perspectives*, New Delhi, Atlantic Pub., 2008, p. 33.

⁷⁰ *Talks on Śaṅkara’s Vivekachoodāmani*, trans. by Swami Chinmayananda, Vol.II, Madras, Chinmaya Publications, 1999, Stanza 123, P. 96.

1. *Manas* – when the thoughts are in a state of chaos and agitation, with doubts and despairs, they constitute the ‘mind’.
2. *Buddhi* – when *manas* produce definite knowledge of an object, then it is called intellect. Willing, wishing, desiring, judging, etc. are the functions of the intellect.
3. *Ahaṅkāra* – The vanity of the individual that arrogates to itself both the doubts and the decisions as its own is called *ahaṅkāra*, which expresses in terms of ‘I’ and ‘mine’.
4. *Citta* – it is the awareness or consciousness, which is playing upon the mind-intellect-ego. In its pure state, unconditioned by these three, the *citta* becomes the pure consciousness, the infinite (*Cit*).

These four factors constitute the internal organs, whose play through the organs of knowledge and action makes it possible for a person to come in contact with the world around him.⁷¹

Further, Śaṅkara explains that *Vṛtti* is the modification of internal organ, so far as the internal organ or the *antaḥkaraṇa* is concerned. The *Vṛtti* can be experienced at the time of the experience of ‘*Aham Brahmāsmi*,’ while the outer sense cannot perceive an object without the internal organ even if it is very much before them. Generally, the function of the *antaḥkaraṇa* is to receive and arrange what is conveyed to it through the sense. Though the *antaḥkaraṇa* is unconscious, basically, it is transparent and it has the power to reflect objects, to become conscious of them. The above mentioned power is acquired by the *antaḥkaraṇa* through its reflection to *Ātman*, i.e. consciousness. Now we come to the *prāmānas*. The first *prāmānas* is known as *Pratyakṣha*.

1. *Pratyakṣha*:

Generally, *Pratyakṣha* or perception implies direct, immediate cognition. According to Śaṅkara, “A thing is cognized only by the mind and the senses”⁷² known as *pratyakṣha*. There are two kinds of direct perception – “external and internal. The ‘external’ perception implies cognition of sense objects, namely - sound, touch, form,

⁷¹ Ibid., Stanza 93-94, p. 120.

⁷² *kena Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara’s commentary, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, *Eighth Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya*, Vol.I, Kolkata Adwaita Ashrama, 1999, 1.3, p. 48.

taste and smell by our five sense organs (ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose). When the sense organs contact their respective objects then the *pratyakṣha* knowledge takes place. The ‘internal’ perception means the direct & immediate cognition of pain, pleasure, love, hate, anger, knowledge or ignorance of various objects etc. in & by our mind. Śaṅkara elaborately reveal that in any direct perception, the awareness existing at the level of mind of the person desirous to know an object, as though flows out through his respective sense organ and envelops the available & illumined object. This awareness is thereafter presented to the knower in the mind as a thought of the object, who then ‘knows’ the object. The entire process is extremely fast and implies the involvement of both the mind and the sense organs in all direct perception. Sitting in one place the knower knows even far off objects directly, provided they come in the range of our sense organs. The immediacy of direct cognition is the intrinsic characteristic of perceptual knowledge, and does not merely depend on the organs of perception”⁷³.

Śaṅkara, elucidates perception very psychologically. He says that there is only one external consciousness. That is *Brahman*. When *Brahman* is determined by the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa*), it is called the subject-consciousness (*pramāṭṛcāitanya*). The empirical self (*jīva*) is the subject-consciousness. When the external consciousness is determined by the mental modes, it is called the knowledge-consciousness (*pramāṇa-cāitanya*). When it is determined by an empirical object, it is called the object-consciousness (*viśayacāitanya*). In external perception, the mind goes out to an empirical object through a sense-organ, and is modified into its form. This mental mode of assuming the form of the object is called *vṛtti*. So the knowledge-consciousness or consciousness determined by the mode coincides with the object-consciousness. There is an identification of the apprehending mental mode with the object. The mental mode conforms to the empirical object. The mental order conforms to the given order. In external perception, the mental mode and the object occupy the same position in space. This mark distinguishes perception from inference. Here K.C.Bhattacharya says that “in inference, the mind only thinks of the inferred object but does not go out to meet it. In perception the given element and its interpretation are welded together in a unity, while

⁷³ www.vmission.org.in/Vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm, retrieved on 12.19.2011.

in inference they are kept distinct.”⁷⁴ The perceptive process and the object occupy the same point of time. They occupy the present time.

In the direct perception of an object there is only identification of knowledge consciousness with the object consciousness. But, in the perception of the object as object, there is not only identification of the knowledge-consciousness with the object-consciousness but also identification of the knowledge-consciousness with the subject-consciousness. “In all direct perception, the knowledge is extremely clear but its scope is very limited. What we can directly see not only constitutes an extremely small iota of the wide spectrum of things existing in this universe, but many a times that which is directly cognized is far from truth. We have an extremely beautiful creation right in front of our eyes, but we don’t see the creator directly, but as there can’t be an effect without a cause, so we have to take resort of some other valid means of knowledge to know that inevitable creator. So, also regarding the internal perceptions, the thoughts are gushing through our minds, but we don’t directly see their cause, which has to be inevitably there. Moreover, we directly see a rising sun but astonishingly our deeper probes reveal that the sun never rises.”⁷⁵

Further, there are two categories of Perception: indeterminate (*nirvikalpa*) and determinate (*savikalpa*). Indeterminate perception is non-relational apprehension, like the perception of ‘That thou art’. This verbal knowledge is indeterminate perception. There is no subject-predicate relation in it. Determinate perception is relational apprehension, for instance, ‘I know the jar’. There is subject-predicate relation in it. Perception is, again divided into perception of witness self (*jīvasākṣin*) and perception of the Divine Witness (*Īśvarasākṣin*). The eternal consciousness (*Brahman*) limited by the internal organ is the *jīva*. When it is conditioned by the internal organ, it is the *jīvasākṣin*. The eternal consciousness limited by *Māyā*, it is *Īśvarasākṣin*.⁷⁶

Sometime perceptions become unclear and erroneous. This is called illusory perception or *Khyātivāda*. Every school of philosophy developed its own theory of error

⁷⁴ Bhattacharya, K.C., *The Studies in Vedantism*, Kolkata, Calcutta University Press, 1909, p. 54.

⁷⁵ www.vmission.org.in/Vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm, retrieved on 12.19.2011.

⁷⁶ Sharma, C.D., *The Advaita Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Pub., 1996, pp. 189-191.

made to fit its epistemology and metaphysics, for instance, *Ātamkhyāti*, *Satkhyāti*, *Anyathākhyāti*, *Asatkhyāti*, *Vipṛitkhyāti*, *Akhyāti* and *Anirvacaniya khyātivāda*. *Anirvacaniya khyātivāda* is known as theory of error in *Advaita Vadanta* philosophical tradition. It has been described in terms of being neither *Sat* and *Asat*. According to Śaṅkara, *khyativāda* is also known as *abhasa*, *mithya*, *bhrama*, *maya* and so on. In the illusory perception ‘this is silver,’ the visual organ perverted by a defect comes into contact with nacre, and generates a mental mode in the form of ‘this consciousness’. The consciousness of ‘this’ is perception. There is the identification of ‘this consciousness’ with the knowledge-consciousness and the subject-consciousness. The mental mode goes out through the visual organ to the bright object (‘this’), and is modified into its form. This is perceptive process. Then *avidya* in the form of nacre in the object-consciousness which is identified with the subject-consciousness is transformed into the illusory silver and the subjective illusion of silver with the aid of the impression of silver revived by the perception of brightness, which is common to the nacre and the silver, and a defect in the visual organ. The illusory silver, which is a modification of *avidyā*, exists in ‘this’ consciousness subsisting in *avidyā*.

All effects are modifications of *avidyā*, and subsist in it. The consciousness of ‘this’ is valid perception. The consciousness of ‘silver’ is a memory image. But illusion fuses them into a unitary psychosis, which is perceptual. Illusory silver has illusory reality (*Prātibhāsika satta*), while real silver has empirical reality (*Vyāvahārika satta*). Illusion is contradicted by right perception. Illusory silver is neither existent nor non-existent, but indefinable (*Anirvacaniya*).⁷⁷ It is also known as *Vivartavāda* or *Adhyāsa* which means the cause is real and the effect is appearance. The cause produces the effect without undergoing any change in itself. Śaṅkara says that the world is only appearance of *Brahman*. The world has no independent existence apart from *Brahman*. *Brahman* appears as the world, and being the substratum of the world of the appearance, it is a trans-figurative material cause.

⁷⁷ Sharma, C.D., *The Advaita Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1996, p. 169.

2. *Anumāna* :

Literally translated, “the word *anumāna* means ‘knowing after.’ It means the method by which knowledge is derived from knowledge. It is an indirect, mediate knowledge. We have knowledge of an invariable relationship between two things and on that basis while seeing one we deduce the presence of the other. Thus *anumāna* refers to the logical process of gaining knowledge. The knowledge thus gained is called inferential knowledge or the logical deduction. The nearest word to *anumāna* is inference.”⁷⁸ According to Śaṅkara, “*anumāna* is produced by the knowledge of invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) of the middle term with the major term as such. The knowledge of *vyāpti* is its instrumental cause. The residual impression of it is the intermediate function (*vyāpāra*) which generates inference.”⁷⁹ We say it is nearest word simply because of a slight difference between the exact processes of logical deduction in Eastern thought as compared to the Western system of logical deduction.

“Perception forms the basis of *anumāna*, but at the core of all inferential knowledge lies the knowledge of *vyāpti* or the ‘invariable concomitance’, the invariable relationship between the two objects. We know on the basis of our perceptual knowledge that wherever there is smoke there is fire (the opposite however may not be true). Having known the invariable connection between the two we can logically deduce the presence of fire whenever we see smoke. This is *anumāna*. In all inferential knowledge there are definite steps to be followed. The following steps are accepted for logical deduction of knowledge by the teachers of *Advaita Vedānta*:

- a. Perceptual evidence - We see smoke on the hill
- b. Invariable concomitance - Wherever there is smoke there is fire, as seen in kitchen.
- c. Conclusion - Therefore the hill has fire”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ www.vmission.org.in/Vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm, retrieved on 12.19.2011.

⁷⁹ “*Anumiti karanam anumānam anumitīśca vyāpti jñānājanaya.*” Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian philosophy*, Vol. 2, Delhi, Rajpal & Sons, 1997, pp. 102–113.

⁸⁰ www.vmission.org.in/Vedanta/articles/pramanas.htm, retrieved on 12.19.2011.

3. *Upamāna*:

The “*Mīmāṃsakas & Advaitins* define *Upamāna* as a process by which the knowledge of A’s similarity to B is gained from the perception of B’s similarity to A, which has been seen elsewhere. This methodology is seen as distinct from mere inference, and is thus accepted as a valid mediate method of knowledge. For example, a person, who has seen his cow at home, goes to a forest and sees a *gavaya* (a wild cow but without dewlap). The person sees the similarity ‘This *gavaya* is like my cow’, and on this basis also concludes the opposite to be equally true, that ‘My cow is like this *gavaya*.’ Thus by *upamāna* he gains the knowledge of his cow’s similarity to the *gavaya* from the perception of the *gavaya*’s similarity to his cow.

Upamāna is a distinct means of knowledge, and cannot be clubbed under *anumāna*, because we cannot have a universal proposition that a thing is similar to whatever is similar to it. Such knowledge cannot be gained without the observation of the two similar things together. The *Advaitins* use this method of knowledge by comparison & similarity to logically communicate the nature of *Brahman* and various other things. *Brahman* is said to be resplendent as the sun. By perceiving the luminosity of the sun, the seeker can appreciate the terms like the self-luminosity of *Brahman*”⁸¹.

4. *Arthāpatti*:

This means “postulation, supposition or presumption of a fact. It is a distinct valid method of mediate knowledge. It is, in fact, a method of assumption of an unknown fact in order to account for a known fact that is otherwise inexplicable. The classic example of this method of knowledge is a fat person says that he never eats in the day, and then we can easily postulate that he eats in the night, for the simple reason that without this assumption his fatness & also his getting fatter cannot be explained. *Arthāpatti* can either be from what is seen or from what is heard. The use of this method in Vedanta is in assuming rightly the implications of *Upaniṣadic* statements. Like in the statement ‘The knower of self transcends grief’. Here we see that merely knowledge destroys grief, and

⁸¹ Ibid.

then it can be assumed without any doubt, that all grief has to be false then alone it can be destroyed merely by knowledge. So this is assumption.”⁸²

5. Anupalabdhi:

The “*Advaitins* and Kumārila Bhatt of the *Mimāsaka* school believe *Anupalabdhi* to be a separate independent *pramānā*. It literally means non-apprehension. Non-existence of a thing is apprehended by its non-perception. By not seeing a jar in a place one knows that it is not there. We use this method of knowledge also very often, and this is evident from statements like: ‘There is no teacher in the class-room’, ‘There is no sound here’, ‘this flower has no fragrance’ etc. It may seem paradoxical that non-apprehension of a thing is a means to the apprehension of its non-existence (*abhāva*). But, in fact, both non-perception as well as perception serves as a means to acquire knowledge, for the simple reason that the knower is conscious of both. They lead to positive & negative experiences. Knowledge of non-existence of a thing can be on the basis of direct or indirect knowledge. It could either be on the basis of our immediate non-perception of a thing or even on the basis of inference or verbal testimony. In the former, the knowledge is immediate while in the latter case, which is applicable in supra-sensual objects, the knowledge of *abhāva* of a thing is mediate.”⁸³

6. Śabda:

Śabda pramānā is verbal testimony. “It is also called ‘*āpta-vākyas*’ (statement of a trust-worthy person’, and *agama* (authentic word). A verbal statement, uttered or written, is man’s most potent instrument for transmitting knowledge. We learn mostly by means of words. An oral or written message is a universal mode of communication. We constantly get various information, direction & knowledge through words. Right from school days to this moment, we use words as a valid & effective means of bringing about awareness of things, ideas or emotions. Books, magazines, newspapers, letters, conversations, chats, radio, TV, movies, songs etc., all use or depend on words. We cannot do anything without verbal testimon.”⁸⁴

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

A “verbal statement conveying valid knowledge must have an authentic source which must be free from defects. Only a competent person possessed of knowledge can impart accurate knowledge. Such knowledge needs no verification, unless, of course, there is doubt about its reliability. If all that we know from verbal testimony were to await confirmation, then the bulk of human knowledge would have to be regarded as baseless. Among the Western philosophers, only a few recognize verbal testimony as a valid & independent means of knowledge, but a majority of Indian philosophers do. Those who do not accept it as an independent method of knowledge do realize its great role but simply club it along with other means like inference etc.”⁸⁵

“The process of verbal knowledge cannot be clubbed with inference because it does not involve any knowledge of invariable concomitance as is the case in inference. So it is a category by itself. It is interesting and also worthwhile to go into the exact process of derivation of meaning from a sentence. At times there is substantive-adjective relationship between the subject & predicate of the sentence and at times there may not be such a relationship, but a non-relational entity could form their locus. Such understanding becomes important when it comes to derivation of meaning from sentences like ‘*Tat Tvam Asi*’ (That thou art). Lot of work has been done in regards to the derivation of meaning of a sentence, especially by the *Mimāṃsakas*. Only that combination of words is called a sentence when four factors are taken care of. They are expectancy (*akāṅkṣā*), consistency (*yogyatā*), contiguity (*asatti*), and knowledge of the purport (*tātparyajñānam*). Understanding of all this, facilitates us to understand why verbal testimony is an independent means of knowledge very different from inference etc.”⁸⁶

To sum up, Śaṅkara’s status of reality could be explained and elaborated in various terms with reference to various others schools of thought. For a better understanding of the subject matter, it has been dealt under two different frameworks - ontology/metaphysics and epistemology. Ontologically, he has described the status of reality in terms of *Pañcakośas*, *Brahman*, *Avasthātraya*, *Sākṣichaitanya*, and *Mokṣa*. *Pañcakośas* (five sheaths) is the evolution of consciousness. He elaborates reality as

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Brahman in terms of *Sat*, *Cit*, *Ānanda* and *Satya*, *Jñāna*, *Ananta*. *Sat*, *Cit*, *Ānanda* are not the qualities of *Brahman*, although they all denoted one and the same entity. Similarly, *Satya*, *Jñāna*, *Ananta* contain three different senses of reality, though they are separate among themselves, but they are related to reality as *Brahman* and shows its characteristics.

Brahman is described in two ways, i.e., higher reality and lower reality. Higher reality is the level of *Nirguṇa Brahman* and the lower reality is the stage of *Saguṇa Brahman*. *Nirguṇa Brahman* is indescribable; the best description of it is through the negative formula of *Neti-Neti* or 'Not this, Not this'. Śaṅkara also distinguishes three levels of reality, namely, ultimate reality (*Pāramārthika*), phenomenal reality (*Vyāvahārika*) and imaginary reality (*Prāthibhāsika*). Absolute reality is *Brahman* which is beyond our senses, thought, and language; this is a *Pāramārthika* level of reality. *Prāthibhāsika* is real during illusion and it does not exist when we see empirical thing as its ground and *Vyāvahārika* is real as long as we perceive it through our senses and mind, and it became illusory when *Pāramārtha* is realized.

He explicates status reality as consciousness in terms of *Avasthātraya* i.e. *Jāgrat*, *Svapna* and *Suṣṭi*. Consciousness irradiates all the objects it may be illusory and actual, whether it is in waking stage or in dreaming stage or in deep sleep stage. This Consciousness is the witness of all the stages. Śaṅkara designated it as *Sākṣichaitanya* which is ever present and unchanging entity. But this Consciousness cannot be known through external experiences. We can know it only at the fourth stage i.e., *Turiya*. It is the state of Absolute reality and *Ātman* or *Brahman*. When individual comes to realize his true nature, i.e. Atman, he is liberated from the worldly bondage, away from all the suffering. In *Vedānt*, this stage is known as reality in terms of *Mokṣa*.

Śaṅkara defines the epistemological status of reality with reference to *pramāna vyavasthā* (*antaḥkaraṇa*, *pramānas* or valid means of attaining knowledge, and *anirvacaniya khyātivada*). *Antaḥkaraṇa* is the inherent, innate tendencies of human being. It receives and arranges what is conveyed to it through the senses. It makes possible for a person to come in contact with the world around him. Ultimate reality is comprehended by means of *pramāna*. We establish the existence and non-existence of a

thing only by means of *pramāna*. Śaṅkara accepts six means of knowledge. They are *Pratyakṣha* (Perception), *Anumāna* (Inference), *Upamāna* (Comparison), *Arthāpatti* (Postulation), *Anupalabdhi* (Non-apprehension), and *Śabda* (Verbal Testimony) through which our knowledge of empirical and transcendental world is possible. The erroneous knowledge of object is called *khayti*. *Anirvachniya* means indescribable. Śaṅkara believes beings are neither *sat* nor *asat*. According to this theory, illusion consists in the superimposition of one thing or characteristic of one thing on another. Like in Śaṅkara, I will try to explain and expound the status of reality in Kant's philosophy within the frameworks of ontology and epistemology. In the next chapter, I will discuss the Kant's status of reality in terms of category and noumenon.

CHAPTER-II

Status of Reality in Kant's Philosophy

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the nature and status of reality in Kant's philosophy within the framework of ontology/metaphysics and epistemology. In Kant's philosophy, the status of 'reality' could be understood in terms of categories. He enumerates twelve categories emanating from twelve judgments. These twelve judgments are allocated into four major heads, namely: Quantity, Quality, Relation and Modality. The concept of reality is deduced from the affirmative judgment in quality.

According to Kant, the entire phenomenal world is known through the above mentioned categories and what could not be understood through it is unknown and unknowable. Hence, in Kant's philosophy, the noumenon could not be known through these categories because these categories are not applicable to the noumenon. In this way, the possibility, validity and limitation of the categories to the phenomenal world is illustrated. And with the help of the categories, we can achieve knowledge of an object in its true sense. If we attempt to apply these categories of understanding to the noumenon, it leads to the creation of paralogisms and antinomies.

Hence, it could be suggested that, the realm beyond the categories is that of faith and the realm within the categories is that of reason. Therefore, the concept of god, freedom of will and immortality of soul are explained by Kant as three postulates of Morality. Thus, the focus of the study will be on the possibility, validity and limitation of the categories of understanding. Accordingly, first I will discuss Kant's status of reality under epistemological framework and then leap on to the ontological framework. In the course of analyzing the categories, I shall also explain the historical context of Kant's philosophy in relation to the status of reality and then attempt to explore and examine other related concepts, namely, sensibility and understanding, transcendental deduction of categories, synthetic a priori judgment, transcendental schema, transcendental synthesis of imagination and transcendental consciousness.

Part-I

2.1. Epistemological Status of Reality

In the history of modern western philosophy, there are two schools of knowledge - Rationalism and Empiricism. Rationalists believe that universal and necessary knowledge can be achieved only through reason and not through senses. Later on, this thought converted into Dogmatism due to its individualistic nature, whereas Empiricists believe that all knowledge springs from sense perception or experience, so all knowledge is probable. This thought is Skeptical in nature, as they do not believe in certainty of knowledge.¹

Kant addressed both the challenges of dogmatism and skepticism in his works. According to him, sensibilities and understanding are the two factors which constitute knowledge. Sensibility is the faculty of intuition and understanding is the faculty of concepts. Through intuition objects are given and through concepts they are thought. Sensibility furnishes the manifold materials which are distributed in haphazard and unintelligible manner, whereas the understanding unifies them and makes them intelligible. Kant says sensibility and understanding are important for each other. He says “Concepts without percepts are empty and percepts without concepts are blind.”²

Kant remarked about his two philosophical precursors ‘Leibnitz’ and ‘Locke.’ “Leibnitz *intellectualized* appearances, just as Locke *sensualized* all concepts of the understanding i.e., interpreted them as nothing more than empirical or abstracted concepts of reflection. Instead of seeking in understanding and sensibility, two sources of representations which, while quite different, can supply objectivity valid judgments of things only in conjunction with each other, each of these great men holds to only one of the two, viewing it as in immediate relation to thing in themselves. The other faculty

¹ Brinkmann, Ediklaus, *German Idealism*, London, Routledge , 2001, p. 37.

² Kant, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 50.

regarded as serving only to confuse or to order the representation which this selected faculty yields.”³

Kant, therefore, found the exclusive claims of the rationalist and the empiricist erroneous. He asserted that senses and understanding are equally important for knowledge. He explains that the objects are given to us by means of sensibility, but it cannot create the object and this is the point where Kant fundamentally differs from any form of subjective idealism. Sensibility, Kant emphasizes, refers to a reality which is completely independent of the perceiving subject. Kant calls it the ‘thing-in-itself’ which affects our senses and thereby furnishes the materials for our cognition. Kant’s position on sensibility is very significant. However, it may be inconsistent, because it supports the claims of the empiricists like Locke and Hume.

Kant, however, differs from the empiricists on the ground that, “...though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience.”⁴ Kant is not provoked by the empiricist approaches of *Locke* and *Hume*, but by their attempt to overestimate sensibility and to refute the general ideas. In reference to the general ideas, Locke says they “are the inventions and creatures of the understanding, made by it for its own use, and concern only signs... When therefore we quit particulars, the generals that rest are only the creatures of our own making...”⁵ Similarly, Hume says, “... all general ideas are nothing but particular ones annexed to a certain term...,”⁶ and whatever appears to be necessary in impressions and ideas can be accounted for by the laws of association based on customary transitions, habits etc. This conclusion of the empiricist investigation confines human cognition within the limits of ‘the given’, within the existing order of things and events, and eliminates universality and necessity which put human cognition on secure grounds. Such an attempt of attributing general ideas to the forces of customary transitions, habits, etc. is, for Kant,

³ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

tantamount to the denial of the ‘apriori’ activity of human mind. Kant says, “All our knowledge starts with the sense, proceeds from there to understanding and ends with reason beyond which there is no higher faculty to be found in us for elaborating the matter of intuition and bringing it into the highest unity of thought.”⁷

This above definition is sufficient to resolve the dispute between rationalism and empiricism and reconcile them. While Kant appreciates the claim of the empiricists that all knowledge precedes from sensation but, at the same time, he rejects their claim that all our knowledge is confined within the sphere of sensibility. According to Kant, knowledge derived from sensations is obscure. To order them and make them meaningful, concepts are required, which they owe their origin not from sensations but from understanding. So here the claim of the rationalist is justified that there are certain concepts which doesn’t originate from sensations.

Descartes underestimates the contribution of sensation to knowledge by saying that the knowledge derived through them is confused and overestimates the role of reason at the faculty of clear and distinct knowledge. The famous dictum of Descartes is, “*I think, therefore I am*”. From this, it follows that the knowledge of an object is due to mind. Contrary to this, Kant maintains that thoughts or categories cannot produce object; they can only simply determine the nature of the objects which is conveyed through sensation. He says, “The categories cannot of themselves give us any knowledge...that they come to have real significance is due to the fact that they are brought to bear upon empirical intuitions, and have to be employed in this manner, since otherwise proper knowledge of sense given would remain impossibility.”⁸

Kant, therefore, sets out to prove that human mind possesses certain concepts of organization which are the basis of the origin of human cognition. He formulates that there are certain ‘forms’ in which sensibility is posited in order. Those forms themselves cannot be derived from sensibility and must therefore be ‘apriori’. Kant

⁷ Ibid., p. 283.

⁸ Koner, S., *Kant*, London, Penguin Books, 1960, p. 94.

says, “There are two pure forms of sensible intuition serving as principles of apriori knowledge, namely, space and time.”⁹

In *Critique of Pure Reason* entitled as ‘Transcendental Aesthetic’, Kant discusses space and time as forms of intuition under two heads: Metaphysical and Transcendental. In former exposition, he tries to show that space and time are apriori and they cannot be derived from sensibility. In the latter, he states that though space and time cannot be derived from sensibility, yet every manifold of sensibility has to be received in the form of space and time. He regards space and time as unitary one, because every event is spatial and temporal.¹⁰

He, however, denies the concepts of absolute space and absolute time independent of perceiving mind as held by Newton and Leibnitz. Kant believes that space and time are in no sense independent of the perceiver and, “...if the subject, or even only the subjective constitution of senses in general, be removed, the whole constitution and all the relations of objects in space and time, nay, space and time themselves would vanish.”¹¹ Space and time are, for Kant, always mind dependent.

Kant uses a term ‘Transcendentally ideal’ for space and time which means they are not independent realities and cannot be applied to things-in-itself.¹² He says, “...we can indeed say that space comprehends all things that appear to us as external, but not all things in themselves by whatever subject they are intuited...we deny to time all claims of absolute reality; that is to say, we deny that it belongs to things absolutely, as their condition or property, independently of any reference to the form of our sensible intuition; properties that belong to things in themselves can never be given to us through the senses.”¹³ At the same time, for Kant, space and time are ‘empirically real’ because

⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁰ Singh, R.P., *Critical Examination of Immanuel Kant's Philosophy*, New Delhi, Intellectual Pub., 1987, p. 38.

¹¹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 82.

¹² William, R. Schrodter, *Continental Philosophy*, Australia, Black Well Pub., 2004, p. 83.

¹³ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 123.

every manifold of sensibility has to be received in the form of space and time. For Kant, sensibility which is posited and ordered in the form of space and time becomes the object of knowledge.

It is completely independent of thought, essentially independent of the synthesizing operations of human mind. These objects might indeed constitute intuition without thought, but not knowledge; and consequently, it would be as good as nothing for us, because we could not have any possible knowledge of such appearances. Kant also says about them as “Appearances can certainly be given intuition independently of the function of understanding ... that representation which can be given prior to all thought is called intuition, thus sensible objects are independent of thought.”¹⁴

The appearances which are posited and ordered in space and time are called blind and chaotic. In order to give meaning to them, it is required to determine them under one or more of the categories of understanding. Against the empiricists, Kant tries to show that universality and necessity are more than the products of sensible intuitions. In other words, universality and necessity are applicable to the sensible intuitions without arising from them. And Kant tries to establish this point in the transcendental deduction of categories of understanding. Through these transcendental conditions of understanding, he seeks to satisfy its thrust to systematic unity of the materials given in sensibility. While formulating categories, Kant quite often criticizes Aristotle, saying, “He merely picked them up as they came in his way.”¹⁵ In fact, the differences between Kant and Aristotle regarding the categories are arising out of their fundamental philosophical positions.

Whereas, for Aristotle, an object is the amalgamation of form and content, or as he puts, ‘inmattered form and informed matter is the only way that object can be given to us’. But, for Kant, an object is ‘synthetic a priori’ in which the a priori aspect, i.e., the

¹⁴ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1985, p. 120.

¹⁵ Singh, R.P., *Kant and Hegel: Methodology, Ontology, Epistemology Dialectic and Ought*, New Delhi, Galaxy Publications, 1990, p. 15.

forms, cannot exist independent of the human mind but they can exist independent of the synthetic aspects which constitute the contents. Kant's distinction between form and content leads to his fundamental difference with Aristotle. It is basically the nature of the origin of the categories that Kant criticizes Aristotle, saying, "...there are to be found in it some modes of pure sensibility, and an empirical concept none of which has any place in a table of concepts that trace their origin to the understanding."¹⁶

Categories, for Kant, mean pure concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains within itself a priori. He deduces twelve categories of understanding from the corresponding judgments. Kant says, "In every judgment there is a concept which holds of many representation, and among them of a given representation that is immediately related to an object".¹⁷ The twelve categories are as under¹⁸

Kind of Judgments	Table of Categories
• Quantity	
Universal - All S is P	Unity
Particular - Some S is P	Plurality
Singular - S is P	Totality
• Quality	
Affirmative - S is P	Reality
Negative - S is not P	Negation
Infinite - S is not P	Limitation

¹⁶ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. by W.H. Johnston and L.G. Struhers, Vol. I, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1966, p. 69.

¹⁷ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 105.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-110.

- **Relation**

Categorical - S must be P	Substance Accident
Hypothetical - If there is S then P	Cause-Effect
Disjunction - S exists either through P or Q or R	Reciprocity or Action- Reaction

- **Modality**

Problematic - S may be P	Possibility-Impossibility
Assertion - S is P	Existence-Non-Existence
Necessary - S must be P	Necessity-Contingency

He divides all kinds of judgment into four main heads, that is - quantity, quality, relation and modality. But deals with them separately and does not show any interrelation. Each head contains three subdivisions which are interrelated. And from each judgment, a concept is derived. Under quantity, the judgment is universal, particular or singular. “All crows are black” is a universal judgment because the concept of the subject is universally applicable to the concept of the predicate. In every universal judgment, a concept of unity is involved. He deduces the concept of unity from the proposition “All S are P”. He asserts “Some cows are black” as a particular judgment because the concept of subject is not universally applicable to the concept of the predicate. In a particular judgment, a concept of plurality is involved. ‘Ram is mortal’ is a singular judgment, because the concept of the subject is in totality with the concept of the predicate. He deduces the concept of totality from the proposition ‘S is P’.¹⁹

¹⁹ Singh, R.P., *A Critical Examination of Immanuel Kant’s Philosophy*, New Delhi, Intellectual Pub., 1987, p. 49.

Similarly, under quality, the judgment is affirmative, negative and infinite. “All crows are black” is an affirmative judgment because the concept of subject has a positive predicate. In an affirmative judgment, the concept of reality is involved. Kant deduces the concept of reality from the judgment in which the concept of subject has a positive predicate. “Some mortal beings are not men”, is a negative judgment because in it the concept of the subject excludes the concept of the predicate. Kant deduces the concept of negation from a negative judgment. An infinite judgment is “Hydrogen is not green.” Because in it one might be considering two alternatives - 1. Hydrogen gas has some color other than green, and 2. That hydrogen gas has no color at all. Therefore, this judgment may include both positive and negative judgment which is infinite because it includes both reality and negation.

According to Kant, the relation in a judgment can be of three kinds, namely, categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive. Thus, “Socrates must be mortal”, is a categorical judgment. Every proposition where “S must be P” is maintained, is regarded by Kant as a categorical judgment. Therefore, the concept of inherence and subsistence is involved in every categorical judgment because the concept of the subject is inherent and subsistent in the concept of the predicate. “If there is a perfect justice, the obstinately wicked are punished”, is a hypothetical judgment, because it “contains the relation of two proposition...”, namely, “There is a perfect justice” and, “The obstinately wicked are punished”. In a hypothetical judgment, the truth of the “judgment remains undermined.”²⁰ But the second proposition depends on the first proposition. Kant holds that the concept of causality and dependence is involved in every hypothetical judgment; because the first proposition is regarded as the cause of the second and the second proposition is regarded as dependent on the first.

If we say “The world exists either through blind chance, or through inner necessity, or through an external cause”, then it is a disjunctive judgment because “each of these propositions occupies a part of the sphere of the possible knowledge

²⁰ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1985, p. 109.

concerning the existence of a world in general; all of them together occupy the whole sphere.”²¹ Kant states that in a disjunctive judgment, we assert either two or more than two propositions which are mutually exclusive but jointly they give the complete knowledge. Therefore, the concept of community is involved in every disjunctive judgment. Thus, Kant deduces the concepts of inherence and subsistence, causality and dependence, and community from the judgments which are categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive respectively. All these concepts are interrelated because “community is the causality of substances reciprocally determining one another.”²²

Under modality, the judgments are either problematic, or assertoric, or apodictic. Kant says, “problematic judgments are those in which affirmation or negation is taken as merely possible (optional)”²³. Thus, “Earth exists through an external cause” is a problematic judgment because it can either be affirmed or negated. Kant maintains that the concepts of possibility and impossibility are involved in a problematic judgment because it can be regarded either as possible or impossible. “There exists a perfect justice”, is an assertoric judgment because the existence of a perfect justice is merely an assertion, which can either be affirmed or denied in existence. On this basis, Kant deduces the concepts of “existence and nonexistence” from the judgment which is assertoric. Similarly, “Socrates must be mortal” is an apodeictic judgment because its concepts of necessity and contingency from the judgment is apodeictic.

In this way, Kant deduces the twelve categories from the twelve judgments. Under the head quantity, the judgments are universal, particular or singular; and the categories deduced from those judgments are unity, totality and plurality. The concept of reality, negation and limitation are from the judgments affirmative, negative and infinite. Under the relation and modality the judgments are categorical, hypothetical and disjunctive; and problematic, assertion and necessary. Kant deduces the concepts from each of these judgments. They are substance, cause-effect, reciprocity or action-

²¹ Ibid., p. 109.

²² Ibid., p. 109.

²³ Ibid., p. 109-10.

reaction; and possibility-impossibility, existence-non-existence, necessity-contingency respectively.

According to Kant, the categories are the original, pure concepts of synthesis that the understanding contains within itself apriori. But these apriori concepts have nothing to do with the way objects are given to us. The conformity of objects given in sensible intuition with the categories is possible only if there is something common to both of them. Kant says “obviously there must be some third thing which is homogeneous on the one hand with category, and on the other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter possible. This mediating representation must be pure, that is, void of all empirical content, and yet, at the same time, it must be, in one respect, intellectual, and, in another, be sensible. Such a representation is Transcendental Schema.”²⁴ And “since time is both sensible and apriori, it has something in common both with the sensible manifold and with the pure category and, therefore, enables this mediation to be effected.”²⁵ ‘Time’ as a transcendental schema connects the categories of understanding to the manifolds of sensibility which makes our knowledge universal and necessary.

The transcendental schema of the categories of quantity - unity, plurality and totality - is called ‘number’. This is so, because an object which is given in perception is quantity only if it can be measured. Measurement implies the addition of units which is necessarily a success in time. The categories of quality (reality, negation and limitation) is “degree of intensity”, which means that every manifold of sensibility is capable of increasing and decreasing in intensity and this is a succession in time. As regards, the categories of relation, the schema of the substance is ‘permanence of the real in time’ that of causality is the succession of the manifold, in so far as that succession is subject

²⁴ Cassires, H.W., *Kant’s First Critique- An Appraisal of the Permanent Significance of Kant’s critique of Pure Reason*, London, George Allen & Uawin Ltd, 1968, pp. 89-98.

²⁵ Ewing, A.C., *A Short Commentary to Pure Reason*, London, University of Chicago Press Ltd., 1970, p. 145.

to a rule, that of community is the co-existence' according to a universal rule of the other.

And, at the last, the categories of modality are - the schema of possibility is the possibility in the time and that of impossibility is no possibility in time, the schema of existence is existence in time, the schema of non-existence is no existence in time, the schema of necessity is being an object at all time and that of contingency is being an object at no time.²⁶ Thus, we can say that the categories constitute the apriori basis of all our knowledge. And the knowledge which comes out is called synthetic apriori.²⁷

According to Kant, all judgment in which the relation of the subject to the predicate is thought. This relation is possible in two ways:

- Either the predicate is implied in the subject
- Or the predicate is not implied in the subject

In the former case, the judgment is called analytic and in the latter case, it is called synthetic. As in the example, "All bodies are extended," the predicate 'extended' is implied in the subject 'bodies'. Hence, here the judgment is analytic. But in the judgment "all bodies are heavy" the predicate 'heavy' is something quite different from anything that can be thought in the mere concept of body in general. So, here, the judgment is synthetic.

Kant admits that the criteria of universality and necessity must be found in analytic judgment; they cannot be derived from sensibility. Whereas, synthetic judgments are contingent and probable and they derived from sensibility. Apriori judgments may not be analytic because the predicate may not be implied in the subject. Kant explains apriori judgment by giving an example 'every event must have a cause,'

²⁶ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1985, p. 83.

²⁷ Ewing, A.C., *A Short Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1970, p. 145.

here the predicate 'cause' does not implies in the subject 'event'. So, it is not analytical judgment, though the criteria of universality and necessity are present.

Kant considers synthetic judgments because the predicate indicates something more than the subject, and the categories of understanding are apriori because they are not derived from sensibility, and they express universality and necessity. With the combination of the above two criteria we get a synthetic apriori judgment.

Kant believes the knowledge of the thing-in-itself is beyond the reach of categories of understanding. Though, the thing-in-itself is the ground and the cause of appearances, and exists independently, yet neither the category of cause nor existence nor any other category can appreciate it. Here, Kant draws a distinction between 'knowing' and 'thinking' and says, "...though we cannot know these objects as things in themselves, we must yet be in a position at least to think them as things-in-themselves."²⁸ In this manner, A.C. Ewing explains, "we do not know anything about things-in-themselves, but we can do what might be described as thinking them in a sort of way, and his assertion of their unknowability is not based on any assumption about their nature but on the mere absence of those spatial and temporal features which can be presupposed in human knowledge. Again we have no knowledge of them according to the categories, but we can and must use the categories in thinking of them. However, indeterminate and formal this use must inevitably be."²⁹

Even, Kant uses the term categories in two senses: 1. the pure unschematized categories and 2. the schematized categories. In the former sense, he asserts the possibility of employing them to thing-in-itself and in the latter, he denies the same. As I have discussed, sensibility and understanding are the two fundamental sources that posited and ordered in space and time, becomes the object of knowledge. Nevertheless,

²⁸ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1985, p. 147.

²⁹ Ewing, A.C., *A Short Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, London, The University of Chicago Press 1970, p. 143.

Kant says that only the combination of understanding and sensibility can enable us to know the objects.

The conformity of objects given in sensibilities to the categories of understanding can be appreciated by a synthesis of imagination'.³⁰ Kant elucidates that, "we entitle the synthesis of the manifold in imagination transcendental, if without distinction of intuitions it is directed exclusively to the apriori combination of the manifold; and the unity of this synthesis is called transcendental, if it is represented as apriori necessary in relation to the original unity of apperception. Since this unity of apperception underlies the possibility of the all knowledge, the transcendental unity of the synthesis of imagination is the pure form of all possible knowledge; and by means of it all objects of possible experience must be presented apriori."³¹

The transcendental synthesis of imagination combines the manifold of sensibility in a single space and time. It is, however, not simply a synthesis of spaces and times but of what fills spaces and times, i.e. the material reality given to sensibility under the forms as spaces and times. It is, therefore, due to the transcendental synthesis of imagination that every object must be said to be possible, actual and necessary.

However, the transcendental synthesis of imagination is not the ultimate faculty. But it is the 'transcendental consciousness'³² which provides the ultimate unity between sensibility and understanding. Kant says, "The transcendental unity of appreciation relates to the pure synthesis of imagination as an apriori condition of the possibility of all combination of the manifold in knowledge."³³

The transcendental consciousness is the ultimate subject of knowledge – the knower, and this is central to Kant's much celebrated 'Copernican Hypothesis'. This transcendental consciousness is the medium of universality and necessity in our

³⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

³¹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1985, p. 143.

³² Ibid., p. 144.

³³ Ibid., p. 148.

experience. The common structure of the soul is 'transcendental unity of self-consciousness. It consists of the forms of intuition and forms of understanding, which are not static forms, but forms of operation that exist only in the act of apprehending and comprehending sensibility. The forms of intuition synthesize the manifold of sensibility into spatiotemporal order. By virtue of the categories, the results of the spatiotemporal order are brought to universal and necessary relations of cause and effect, substance, reciprocity, and so on. And this entire complex is unified in the transcendental apperception which relates all experience to the 'thinking ego', thereby giving the experience the continuity of being 'my experience'.

It is the highest synthesis and the awareness of an 'I think' which accompanies every representation. Kant says, "it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representation; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or least would be nothing to me."³⁴ The 'I Think' can be regarded as continuous, active and present in the series of representations, only if they are given in a unity with one another through it.

The transcendental consciousness is the logical presupposition of all knowledge and it is the final condition of every act of knowledge. It is "the vehicle of all concepts ... and is itself transcendental."³⁵ But the transcendental consciousness can never be given in sensibility. And if the categories of understanding are applied to it, there arise paralogisms, it means irrelevant illogical conclusion. The judgment 'I think' contains no knowledge of the 'I'. The fallacies arise when certain conclusions are drawn from 'I think', namely, 1. that the soul is substance, 2. that it is simple, 3. that is a person, and 4. that is in relation to possible object in space.

³⁴ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 152-53.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Kant's fundamental conflict behind Copernican hypothesis has a double significance. Against rationalism, he claims that it is not God but the transcendental consciousness that is responsible for the unity of experience. And against empiricism, he argues that mind has not to conform to objects, rather objects have to conform to mind. In contrast of rationalist's theo-centric view and empiricist's cosmo-centric view, Kant establishes an ego-centric view.

From the above theory of knowledge, Kant discovered its possibility, validity and limits of knowledge which has attained a very prominent place in the epistemological inquiries. The main contention behind Kant's Copernican revolution in the sphere of epistemology is he places man at the center of epistemology and asks "what must the world of knowledge be in order for us to know it?"³⁶ Thus, we can say that in Kant's epistemology, reality is a category through which we can know the phenomenal world, but these categories are not applicable in the sphere of noumenon. In the next part of the chapter, I will discuss the nature and status of reality as noumenon and phenomenon within the ontological/metaphysical framework.

Part-II

2.2. Ontological / Metaphysical Status of Reality

In western philosophy, ontology has two main trends: namely, idealist and materialist. The former asserts that spirit is the fundamental source of existence, sustenance and dissolution of the entities. The latter regards matter as the primary source of all entities. In ontology, Kant discusses, "the more general properties of

³⁶ Singh, R.P., *Kant and Hegel: Methodology, Ontology, Epistemology. Dialectic and Ought*, New Delhi, Galaxy Publications, 1990, p. 23.

things, the difference between spiritual and material beings.”³⁷ According to this point of view, he draws a distinction between Noumenon and Phenomenon.

For Kant, both noumenon and phenomenon are completely opposite ontological concepts. Generally the term noumenon is a posited object or event that is known without the use of the senses. The term is used in contrast with, or in relation to “phenomenon”, which refers to anything that appears to, or is an object of the senses. In ancient philosophy, the noumenal realm was equated with the world of ideas known to the philosophical mind, in contrast to the phenomenal realm, which was equated with the world of sensory reality. Modern philosophy has usually denied the possibility of knowledge independent of the senses, and Kant gave this point of view, its classical version, saying that the noumenon constitutes the realm of the spiritual where in lies the basics of Kantian morality and it is free from the applicability of the categories, and the phenomena is the sphere of actual and possible scientific knowledge wherein the categories have their applicability.

Kant writes “Appearances, so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called phenomenon. But if I postulate things which are mere objects of understanding and which, nevertheless, can be given as such to an intuition ...Such things would be entitled noumenon.”³⁸ Kant further explains that, an object is “...given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone yielded us intuition...”³⁹ The intuitions, which are yielded by sensibility, are regarded by Kant as sensible intuition. The manifolds of sensible intuitions, in so far as the “appearances”,⁴⁰ but when they are determined in accordance with the unity of the categories, they become phenomena. Hence, we can say that the human cognition is confined to the sphere of phenomena, that is to say, it is confined to the extent in so far as an object can be given in sensible

³⁷ Quoted in, Singh, R.P., *Kant and Hegel: Methodology, Ontology, Epistemology, Dialectic and Ought, etc.* New Delhi, Galaxy Publications, 1990, p. 2.

³⁸ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*; trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, pp. 265-6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

intuition and is determined by the unity of the categories. Kant states that there must be something which can never be given in a manifold of sensible intuition, however, it can be regarded as an object of understanding, such a thing he describes as noumenon.

Kant also makes a distinction between *positive* and *negative* noumenon. Kant writes, “If by ‘noumenon’ we mean a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition, and so abstract from our mode of intuiting it, this is a noumenon in the *negative* sense of the term.”⁴¹ “But if we understand by it an object of a non-sensible intuition, we thereby presuppose a special mode of intuition, namely, the intellectual, which is not that which we possess, and of which we cannot comprehend even the possibility. This would be ‘noumenon’ in the *positive* sense of the term.”⁴² Kant doubts that we have such a faculty. Because, for him, intellectual intuition would mean that thinking of an entity and its being represented would be the same. He argues that humans have no way to apprehend the meaning of positive noumenon.

Since, however, such a type of intuition - intellectual intuition - forms no part, whatsoever of our faculty of knowledge. Because it follows that the employment of the categories can never extend further than to the objects of experience. Doubtless, indeed, there are intelligible entities not corresponding to the sensible entities; there may also be intelligible entities to which our sensible faculty of intuition has no relation whatsoever; but our concepts of understanding, being mere forms of thought for our sensible intuition, could not in the least apply to them. That, therefore, which we entitle ‘noumenon’ must be understood as being such only in a negative sense, it means “... under the title of an unknown something.”⁴³

The concepts of noumenon being unknown and unknowable are regarded by Kant as an idea of reason which is transcendent. He postulates the idea of reason because he holds that there must be a sphere of the unconditioned. It is in this sense that the ideas of reason, which are transcendent, differ from the categories of understanding

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 267.

⁴² Ibid., p. 264.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 273.

which are transcendental. Idea of reason has no applicability to the phenomena; whereas no knowledge of phenomenon is possible without the application of the categories of understanding. Kant holds that in the phenomenal world, everything is conditioned, but reason not satisfied with what is merely conditioned and therefore, reason gets the concept of unconditioned. According to him, the concept of unconditioned can never exist in the phenomenal world because whatever exists in the phenomenal world is always conditioned. Therefore, he regards the unconditioned as an “idea” and since the unconditioned is a demand of reason, so it can be regarded as an idea of reason.

In his analysis, there are three ideas of reason, namely: immortality of soul, freedom of will and existence of God. Hence, the concept of noumenon constitutes the idealist aspect of his ontology and it remains unknown and unknowable. But the concept of phenomenon constitutes the sphere of actual and possible scientific knowledge. The phenomenon and noumenon are two different aspects of Kant’s ontology.

Further, in Kant’s philosophy, noumenon and thing-in-itself are used as identical terms. According to Kant, thing-in-itself is the ground and cause of the appearances. He says “...behind the appearance is we must admit and assume something else which is not an appearance—namely, thing-in-itself although, since we can never be acquainted with these, but only with the way in which they affect us, we must resign ourselves to the fact that we can never get any nearer to them and can never know what they are in themselves.”⁴⁴ Thus, things-in-themselves exist as the ground and cause of appearances, they are something which affect our senses and are the cause of appearances.

But they can never be given in a manifold of sensible intuitions and the categories of understanding cannot be applied to them. Therefore, they remain unknown and unknowable. Thus we can know things only in so far they are given to us in manifold of sensible intuitions and for that matter in appearances, and are determined

⁴⁴ Paton, H.J., *The Moral Law ; Kant’s Groundwork of Metaphysic of Morals*, London, Hutchinson University Library 1969, p. 111.

by the categories, but things-in-themselves are unknown and unknowable. Kant says "...appearances are only representations of things which are unknown as regards what they may be in-themselves".

Kant also explains thing-in-itself as a "limiting concept" whose function is "to curb the pretensions of sensibility."⁴⁵ Further Kant adds, "Even if noumenon is unknowable, they are still needed as a *limiting concept*."⁴⁶ Without them, there would be only phenomenon, and since we have complete knowledge of our phenomenon, we would, in a sense, know everything. He says, "Further, the concept of a noumenon is necessary, to prevent sensible intuition from being extended to things-in-themselves, and thus to limit the objective validity of sensible knowledge".⁴⁷

For Kant, the existence of a noumenal world limits reason to what he perceives to be its proper bounds, making many questions of traditional metaphysics, such as the existence of God, the soul, and free will, unanswerable by reason. Kant derives this from his definition of knowledge as "the determination of given representations to an object."⁴⁸ As there are no appearances of these entities in the phenomena, Kant is able to make the claim that they cannot be known to a mind that works upon "such knowledge that has to do only with appearances."⁴⁹ These questions are ultimately the "proper object of faith, not of reason."⁵⁰

Thus, it is the concept of noumenon, as a limiting concept, which prevents sensible intuitions from being extended to thing-in-itself and limits the sphere of human cognition in order to leave room for faith. The sphere of faith constitutes the realm of the spiritual wherein lies the basis of his moral laws. The noumenal entities, i.e., the existence of God, immortality of the soul and freedom of the will, are regarded by Kant

⁴⁵ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, pp. 272.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-2.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 273.

⁴⁸ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, Guyer and Wood, 1781, p. 362.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁵⁰ Rohmann, Chris. "Kant" *A World of Ideas: A Dictionary of Important Theories, Concepts, Beliefs, and Thinkers*. London, Ballantine Books, 1999, p. 39.

as the postulates of morality. Scientific knowledge is doomed to disappointment if it tries to penetrate into these entities, because none of them can belong to the phenomenal world. Therefore, Kant regards them as a matter of faith.

Consequently Kant's notion of the existence of thing-in-itself, as the ground and cause of appearances, is self-contradictory. It is also not consistent when it is regarded as unknown and unknowable, because if we know that a thing exists and is a cause, we know that the concepts of existence and causation apply to it. It means we have some knowledge of it. So it is not unknowable or even unknown. The main problem lies in Kant's epistemology is it regards the categories as inapplicable to the thing-in-themselves. Here it may be pointed out that the categories are derived by man through his centuries of practical and cognitive activities upon material things.

They reflect the fundamental and universal connections and properties of things, not only as they appear to us, but also as they are in themselves. Therefore, our knowledge of a thing is not only as it appears to us, but also as it is in itself. Consequently, there is no such difference between phenomenon and thing-in-itself. In this perspective, Lenin says, "there is definitely no difference in principle between the phenomenon and thing-in-itself, and there cannot be any such difference. The only difference is between what is known and what is not yet known. And philosophical inventions of specific boundaries between the one and the other invention to the effect that the thing-in-itself is beyond phenomenon...is the sheerest nonsense."⁵¹

In Kant's 'Transcendental Dialectic', he also says that there are three disciplines of traditional metaphysics where knowledge is not possible.⁵² They are Rational Psychology - Related to Self, Rational Cosmology - Related to World, and Rational Theology - Related to God. These three objects of the disciplines are "infinite synthesis" and one cannot posit the necessary condition for intuiting them; therefore, it is impossible to acquire this knowledge. In turn, Kant examines the paralogisms

⁵¹ Lenin, V.I., *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, etc., pp.87-88, Quoted in, Singh, R.P., *Critical Examination of Immanuel Kant's Philosophy*, New Delhi, Intellectual Pub.,1987, p. 14.

⁵² Fuller and McMurrine, *A History of Philosophy*, New Delhi, Oxford and IBH pub.,1976, p. 276.

contained in the demonstrations of rational psychology. In other words, in the context of self, he tries to show that it cannot be conceived within the sphere of epistemology. And if the categories of understanding are applied to it, there arise paralogisms. In the sphere of epistemology, Kant regards the Self or “I think” as transcendental, but in the sphere of morality, it is regarded as transcendent.

According to Kant, ‘I think’ is the logical presupposition of all knowledge and it is the final condition of every act of knowledge. But ‘I think’ or the transcendental consciousness can never be given in sensible intuition. And when the categories of understanding applied to it then arises paralogism,⁵³ means “a formally invalid conclusion”. The judgment ‘I think’, contains no knowledge of the ‘I’. The fallacy ascends when certain conclusions are drawn from ‘I think’, namely: 1. The soul is a substance 2. That is simple 3. That it is a person 4. That it is in relation to possible objects in the space. Out of these four paralogisms, the first three are discussed by Kant with the same arguments that the categories of substance, simple and person, can never be applied to the judgment ‘I think’. On this basis, Kant, while accepting Cartesian premise that ‘I’ is the thinking ego, rejects Descartes’s claim that ‘I think’ is a substance. The fourth paralogism is concerned with the relation of the objects to the soul.

In the first paralogism, Kant says, “that which is the absolute subject of our judgments, is substance. I, as a thinking being, am the absolute subject...therefore, I, as thinking being (soul), am substance.”⁵⁴ Kant states that there is a fallacy involved in the judgment. The category of substance can be applied to “an object given in experience as permanent.”⁵⁵ But in the above judgment, “we have not taken as our basis any experience: the inference is merely from the concept of the relation which all thought has to the ‘I’ as the common subject in which it inheres. Nor should we, in resting it upon experience, be able, the ‘I’ sure observation, to demonstrate such permanence. The

⁵³ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, Guyer and Wood, 1781, p. 329.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

'I' is indeed in all thoughts, but there is not in this representation the least trace of intuition, distinguishing the 'I' from other objects of intuition."⁵⁶ Kant holds that the soul, as a thinker, is always a subject because it is that which thinks and hence it cannot be predicated of anything. But from the fact that soul is a subject, it does not follow that it is also a permanent substance. The category of substance can be applied to an object which can be given in sensible intuition and soul, as thinking being, cannot be given in sensible intuition. On this basis, Kant maintains that it is an invalid conclusion that the soul is a permanent.

In the second paralogism, Kant states, "That, the action of which can never be regarded as the concurrence of several things acting, is simple. Now the soul, or the thinking 'I', is such a being."⁵⁷ Therefore, Kant holds that the 'I' is a simple substance because the action, which forms the 'I', is not a concurrence of several things. However, "every composite substance is an aggregate of actions of accidents, distributed among the plurality of the substance."⁵⁸ But the soul is simple substance and its simplicity is "already involved in every thought."⁵⁹ Thus, Kant considers the proposition "soul is simple" as an analytic proposition. As we know, nothing can be derived from an analytic proposition. "It is, therefore, a mistake to prove the soul, as a simple substance from the simplicity of the soul. The soul can never be given in sensible intuition; hence it cannot be regarded as a simple substance. It means that the simplicity of the soul is not knowledge of the simplicity of the soul. So, according to Kant, the second paralogism, erroneously argues from the logical unity of the soul to the actual simplicity of the soul."⁶⁰

Kant says, in his third paralogism, "that which is conscious of the numerical identity of itself at different time is in so far person. Now the soul is conscious, etc.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 334.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 335.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 334.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 334.

⁶⁰ Singh, R.P., *Critical Examination of Immanuel Kant's Philosophy*, New Delhi, Intellectual Pub., 1987, pp. 102-103.

therefore, it is a person.”⁶¹ Kant’s criticism of the third paralogism concerning personality is exactly like the criticism of the preceding two paralogisms. The fallacy is due to confusion between the logical and the actual identity of the soul. The self-identity of the soul, throughout all its experiences, is only a logical identity and not at all a real identity. This is expressed by the proposition ‘I think’. But from the logical identity of the soul, one cannot deduce the real identity of the underlying soul, because it cannot be given in sensible intuition. Therefore, the third paralogism is an invalid conclusion.

In the fourth paralogism, he says, “that the existence of which can only be inferred as a cause of given perception, has a merely doubtful existence. Now all outer appearance are of such a nature that their existence is not immediately perceived, and that we can only infer them as the cause of given perceptions. Therefore, the existence of all objects of the outer senses is doubtful.”⁶² This paralogism is concerned more with the nature of the objects of perception than with the soul. Kant argues that if it is maintained “only what is in ourselves can be perceived immediately”⁶³ then what we directly perceive is ‘self’ and its states. The external objects, falling altogether outside the self cannot be perceived directly but can only be inferred from our perceptions. However, such an inference can give us no knowledge of objects external to us, because we cannot determine whether the cause of our perception lies within us or outside us.

Therefore, the existence of external objects may be doubtful. This uncertainty is called the ideality of appearances and the doctrine which maintains this is called by Kant as idealism. In exposing the fallacy in this argument, Kant offers a refutation of idealism. He states that the external objects are empirically real and they have their existence only in appearance. As noumenon is unknown and unknowable, we can know the external objects, not as they are in-themselves, but as they appear to us.

⁶¹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, London, Guyer and Wood, 1781, p. 335.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

From the above discussion, one can say that “within the sphere of epistemology, the soul can neither be regarded as a permanent substance nor as simple nor as real but only as a logical subject which is presupposed in every act of cognition. In Kant’s analysis, within the sphere of epistemology, the soul cannot be regarded as immortal.”⁶⁴

Like the immortal soul cannot be known, the world as a whole or as an ultimate reality is not known. Nonetheless, the mind attempts to know all the objects including nature. It leads to mere transcendental illusions. These illusions may be called ‘Antinomies’. “Kant sees the antinomies as the unresolved dialogue between skepticism and dogmatism about knowledge of the world. There are four antinomies, again corresponding to the four heading of the table of categories, i.e., quantity, quality, relation and modality. Each antinomy has a thesis and an antithesis, both of which can be validly proven, and since each makes a claim that is beyond the grasp of spatio-temporal sensation, neither can be confirmed nor denied by experience. The first antinomy argues both that the world has a beginning in time and space, and no beginning in time and space. The second antinomy’s arguments are that every composite substance is made of simple parts and that nothing is composed of simple parts. The third antinomy’s thesis is that agents like ourselves have freedom and its antithesis is that they do not. The fourth antinomy contains arguments both for and against the existence of a necessary being in the world. The seemingly irreconcilable claims of the antinomies can only be resolved by recognizing the proper sphere of our knowledge in each case.”⁶⁵

Thus, the antinomies of rational cosmology (four antinomies are: finite and infinite, simple and complex, conditional and unconditioned, and freedom and causation) and the argument of rational theology (the ontological, cosmological and psycho-theological proofs of the existence of God) are such questions which reason can

⁶⁴ Singh, R.P., *Critical Examination of Immanuel Kant’s Philosophy*, New Delhi, Intellectual Pub., 1987, p. 105.

⁶⁵ Singh, R.P., *Consciousness: Indian and Western Perspectives*, New Delhi, Atlantic Pub., 2008, pp. 154-155.

neither answer nor can it negate them. So, these are the areas where knowledge cannot penetrate and left from faith and morality.⁶⁶

From the above discussion, we can say that in ontological/metaphysical framework Kant explains reality through the concept of noumenon and phenomenon (thing-in-itself). The concept of noumenon constitutes the spiritual aspect of his ontology, whereas the concept of phenomenon represents the sphere of actual and scientific knowledge. Kant accepts that human knowledge is confined and determined by the categories. But human knowledge can never enter into the realm of noumenon because they cannot be cognized by sensible intuitions. Thus, Kant demarcates the cognition into what is cognizable in judgments and what is incognizable. On the ground of what is cognizable and what is incognizable, the epistemological problems arise. He expresses those problems in terms of possibility, validity and limitation of human cognition. His enquiry of epistemology is based on his concepts of categories, space and time which constitute the foundations of human knowledge.

In summing up the chapter, I observed that in Kant's philosophy, reality can be understood within the framework of epistemology and ontology/metaphysics. In epistemology, he accepts the concept of reality as a category under affirmative judgment through which we proceed towards the knowledge of phenomenon. In order to achieve this kind of knowledge, two factors plays a very important role, they are, sensibility and understanding. Only with the combination of these two factors we can acquire the knowledge of this perceiving world. In this manner, the claims of rationalists and empiricists that knowledge can only be achieved through reason and through senses is falsified. But sensibility gives us only blind facts. There is an apriori forms called space and time through which these facts posited and ordered and becomes the object of knowledge. Further, Kant says that these facts are meaningless. In order to give meaning to them we require the categories of understanding. But the categories

⁶⁶ Allison, H.E., *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, London, Yale University Press, p. 272.

need transcendental schema to connect them with the manifold of sensibility which makes our knowledge universal and necessary.

Moreover, Kant says that we also need transcendental imagination for combining sensibility with category in a single space and time. However, Kant does not consider imagination as a final faculty of knowledge. He says that the transcendental consciousness provides an ultimate unity between sensibility and understanding. This kind of consciousness is known as “I think” consciousness, which he calls it as a transcendental unity of pure apperception. It is the ultimate subject of knowledge and the knower.

In ontological framework, Kant discussed the concept of reality as noumenon and phenomenon. The concept of noumenon and phenomenon are completely opposite to each other. He views noumenon from spiritual realm which is independent from our category of understanding, whereas a phenomenon is the sphere of actual and possible scientific knowledge wherein the categories have their applicability. According to him, noumenon is the limitation of human knowledge which can only be imagined but cannot be known.

Further, Kant used noumenon in two senses - positive and negative. The positive sense can only be known through by intellectual intuition; in contrast, the unknown form of noumenon is its negative sense. He considers noumenon as a limiting concept because it limits the sphere of human understanding and brings its concepts like the concept of God, soul and freedom of will into the realm of morality. Kant also recognizes these areas of traditional metaphysics - Rational Psychology, Rational Cosmology and Rational Theology - where knowledge cannot penetrate. Further he discusses the paralogisms that arise when the categories of understanding are applied to rational psychology. There are four paralogisms contained in the demonstrations of rational psychology and they are: 1. The soul is a substance 2. That is simple 3. That it is a person 4. That it is in relation to possible objects in the space. By analysing the

above four paralogisms, he concludes that the soul is only a logical construction and it is a presupposition of every act of human cognition. In the same manner, when the mind attempts to know all the objects including nature it leads to mere transcendental illusions which are called as antinomies. He discusses four antinomies of rational cosmology (finite and infinite, simple and complex, conditional and unconditioned, and freedom and causation) and the argument of rational theology (the ontological, cosmological and psycho-theological proofs of the existence of God). Both are such questions which reason can neither answer nor can it negate them. In this manner, Kant proves the possibility and limitation of human knowledge.

In the present and previous chapters, I have carried out an in depth analysis of the status of reality in Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophy under the framework of epistemology and ontology. It is shown that both the philosophers have explained the status of reality in various terms by drawing influences from their predecessors. As mentioned elsewhere, the concept of reality has been a debatable issue in the history of philosophy. A comparison of both the philosopher's thinking on the status of reality would help us to understand the philosophical discrepancies in it. In the next chapter, I would like to critically compare and contrast the status of reality in Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophy.

CHAPTER - III

Status of Reality in Śaṅkara and Kant:

A Comparison and Contrast

In this chapter, I shall make a critical comparison of the notion of reality between Śaṅkara and Kant in order to bring out the similarities and dissimilarities that they have on the same. Ontologically, both the philosophers believe that there are two levels of reality i.e. *Vyavahārika* and *Paramārthika* (in Śaṅkara) or noumenon and phenomenon (Kant). They both accept that experienced world could be known through *Pramānas* and categories and that which lies beyond experience like noumenon and *Paramartha* could not be understood through these parameters. In addition to this, both the philosophers consider *Sākṣin* and Self as the presuppositions of our knowledge and experiences. However, I shall show that within these features of similarities, there reside the seeds of differences between the thoughts of these two philosophers.

Śaṅkara accepts the knowability of *Vyavahārika* in addition to the knowability of the *Paramārthika* through *Aprokṣānubhūti*, thus not subjecting himself to the criticism of dualism. On the other hand, Kant accepts 'intellectual intuition' for knowing noumenon whose possibility resides not in human being but in the God. Hence, Kant's noumenon becomes the unknown and unknowable. As a result of this, his philosophy gets converted into dualism, which he could never over-ride. Also, while Śaṅkara considers *Sākṣi* as a self-luminous and self-evident entity, for Kant the Self has been reduced to 'I think', a logical construction only.

In order to compare and contrast, I have divided the chapter into four parts which are as follows: i. Ontological/metaphysical status of reality; ii. Epistemological position, related to *pramānās* and categories; iii. Role of *Aprokṣānubhūti* and intellectual intuition; and iv. Reality in terms of *Sākṣin* and Self. By examining the reality within these four frameworks, I shall explain and explore the similarities and dissimilarities in Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophy on reality.

Part-I

3.1. Ontological/metaphysical status of reality

In this section, I shall compare and make a critical analysis between Śaṅkara's and Kant's ontological exposition of reality in terms of *Paramārthika*, *Vyāvahārika* and noumenon, phenomenon. Actually, Śaṅkara believes in three levels of reality, namely, *Paramārthika*, *Vyāvahārika* & *Pratibhasika*. However, for the comparative purpose, I shall take up only the two levels of reality i.e., *Paramārthika* (higher level) and *Vyāvahārika* (lower level). According to Śaṅkara, ontologically, there is no separation between higher level and lower level of reality. However, epistemologically, he makes a distinction between these two levels of reality, of which I shall discuss about the same in the next part of this chapter. Contrary to this, Kant does not accept any higher and lower levels of reality. Even he does not use the word reality for noumenon.

Ontologically, for Kant, noumenon is beyond the categories of understanding but reality could be found in phenomenon and it could be the object of our sense experience. In epistemology, reality is a concept under the category of quality which constitutes an affirmative judgment. For instance, "All crows are black" is an affirmative judgment. In the affirmative judgment, the concept of reality is involved. Kant deduces the concept of reality from the judgment in which the concept of subject has a positive predicate.¹ In this way, Śaṅkara and Kant, both draw an enormous distinction between *Paramārthika* & *Vyāvahārika* level of reality, and noumenon & phenomenon respectively.

According to Kant, noumenon is completely interdependent from our category of understanding. It is beyond our sense of experience. Whereas, the phenomenon is a realm of perceiving world where categories have their applicability. Similarly, Śaṅkara also contests that *Vyāvahārika* is sphere of empirical reality where *pramāṇās* are applied. Both the philosophers agree that there is no place for categories in the domain of noumenon and *Paramārthika*. However, Śaṅkara establishes that *Śruti* is the only

¹ Singh, Ram Lal, *An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Samkara*, Allahabad, Chugh Publications, 1978, p. 22.

pramānā through which we go towards the sphere of *paramārthika*. But *Śruti* does not exist in *Paramārthika* level. Alike other means of knowledge, *Śruti* is also invalid from the transcendental level. Śaṅkara presents an example of rope-snake, where rope is illusory but it creates a real fear. We can say that cause is unreal and the effect is real. Similarly, *Śruti*, though illusory in nature, can certainly reveal the reality.² It is only informative which indicates the meaning of verbal testimony and reminds us of an ever-present fact, but it does not create.

Likewise, Kant states that the categories are valid to the realm of phenomena. Śaṅkara admits that *pramānās* is possible only in the sphere of *Vyāvahārika*. Primarily, the distinctions between these realms are based on the fundamental thesis of Kant and Śaṅkara. Kant says, “Scientific knowledge is incumbent within the world of phenomenon and in the territory of spirituality, it is absolutely impassive.”³ Hence, noumenon and phenomenon are two entirely separate spheres with no mediating transition

Śaṅkara’s primary interest is to understand the relationship between *Ātman* and *Brahman*. In other words, he wanted to know, what are the conceptions which ultimately justify a view of the absorption of the individual into universal soul. Therefore, he goes from *Vyāvahārika* level towards *Paramārthika* level and discovers *Anubhava*, through which we realize the ultimate reality. In this level, all kind of plurality and duality of this external world (*Vyāvahārika*) are removed and this stage is called *Advaita*. But in the Kantian philosophy, noumenon and phenomenon always exists as two distinct spheres.

Śaṅkara says that *Paramārthika* is beyond the subject-object dichotomy, so it cannot be known as an object by reason. Similarly, Kant says that noumenon is unknowable through the categories of understanding. Śaṅkara considers that *Paramārthika* is ultimate reality and it is directly realized through *Aprokshānubhūti*. On

² Ranade, R.D., *A Constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy*, Bombay, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, 1968, p. 156.

³ Cassires, H.W., *Kant’s First Critique- An Appraisal of the Permanent Significance of Kant’s critique of Pure Reason*, London, GeorgeAllen & Uawin Ltd, 1968, pp. 56.

the other hand, Kant believes that noumenon is unknowable and he assumes that noumenon exist as the ground and cause of perceiving world. Śaṅkara too accepts that *Paramārthika* as the ground and cause of experience world (*Vyāvahārika*) but he removes the appearance by the direct realization of worldly cause or *Paramārthika*. In *Advaita vedānta*, appearance is repudiated only with reference to reality. That is, the perceiving world is only an effect and whereas, *Brahman*, the *Paramārthika*, the highest reality, is the cause. Effect alone can be refuted because it is unreal. The ground and cause cannot be negated because it is the ultimate ground on which all effects or phenomenon is superimposed.

Thus, Śaṅkara's realm of *Vyāvahārika* is the realm of phenomenon and it is the manifestation of ultimate reality. Kant also regards phenomenon as the representation of noumenon. In other words, for Kant, phenomenon is posited and ordered in space and time which are apriori forms of sensible intuition. The being of object in spatio-temporal form are based on the idea that they are the object of human sensibility and being the object of the knowledge, it is necessary for them to be given by sensibility.

Hence, all the knowable objects are spatio-temporal. But, in this way, it also follows that the knowable objects are not thing-in-itself. They are determined by human sensibility and comprise their attributes. Precisely, objects, which we know through space and time, are called appearance. The function of knowledge itself makes unknowable to thing-in-itself or noumenon. For instance, if we are to imagine that we are permanently putting on a blue coloured spectacle, therefore all things would appear in blue. Now, the appearance of things is pre-determined because of the colour of the spectacle. Hence, all the things, viewed through the spectacle, would present its appearances but not things-in-itself. Since we know that we are putting on the blue coloured spectacle, so it is already known to us that the things would appear blue.

Therefore, Kant says that the nature of knowable things is pre-determined by us. Due to this reason, we cannot know undetermined nature of the things because we determine it even before knowing it. Phenomenon is the representation of unknown and

unknowable thing-in-itself. To add further, Kant says, “Appearances are only representation of things which are unknown as regards what they may be in themselves.”⁴ According to Śaṅkara, world is appearance but not because of space and time but *Māyā* or *Avidyā*. *Māyā* is essentially the indistinguishable power (*Shakti*) of *Brahman*. The world as we see is the creation of *Māyā*. It has two aspects – conceal (*āvarana*) as a negative aspect and projection (*vikṣepa*) as a positive aspect. In its negative aspect, it conceals the reality and act as a screen to hide it. In its positive aspect, it projects the world’s plurality on the *Brahman*. Thus, for Śaṅkara, the world is appearance as well as illusion.

In contrast, Kant does not accept the illusory nature of the world. For him, both noumenon and phenomenon are real and two different spheres of reality. A phenomenon is not repudiated by noumenon. The categories of understanding have not infiltrated into the realm of noumenon. Categories are the obstacle between human knowledge and reality as it is in itself. In this manner, there is always dualism between experienced world and transcendental world. But in Śaṅkara’s philosophy, world is illusory from the *Paramārthika* point of view. In other words, when we realize the *Paramārthika* through the pure intuition (*Aprokshānubhūti*), the perceiving world becomes illusory. Here *Vyāvahārika* is amalgamated into the *Paramārthika*. It is the realm of non-duality where all determinations, all plurality, all qualities, all categories and all concepts have transcended.

All purposes of language and intellect are dissolved into the sphere of *Paramārthika*. But in Kant’s philosophy duality is permanently present in the spheres of noumenon and phenomenon, however, he never discusses about the unity or non-duality. He always separates the realm of spirituality from the realm of materiality. But for Śaṅkara, there is no any difference between world and reality, for him the ultimate reality is non-dual. While Kant always insists the duality he accepts the differences between experience and reality.

⁴ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*; trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 173.

In Kant's philosophy, noumenon is unknown and unknowable. However, the fundamental difference regarding unknowability of noumenon is that it can be known through intellectual intuition. But we can never realize noumenon because this kind of intuition is not possible in human being. Hence, noumenon is always unknown and unknowable for human intellect. Noumenon is the ground and cause of phenomenal world. But it is beyond the applicability of the categories of understanding which makes it unknown and unknowable. Though we can think of it, but never know it.

Thus, Kant denies the possibility of the knowledge of noumenal entities like God, soul, etc. We can only know worldly reality, though we are aware that there is something existing as separate from this world which we are only perceiving an indication of it. Contrary to Kant, Śaṅkara proves that ultimate reality is never unknown and unknowable. So *Paramārthika* cannot be known by limited mind. However, he accepts, one can comprehend it directly through pure instinct i.e. *Anubhava*. Śaṅkara responds, to those who accept that absolute reality is unknown and unknowable, if we accept that reality exists but not known, as Kant accepts, is a contradiction in terms, for at least reality is known as unknowable by intellect. In his words, "it does not stand to reason to say that some external thing exists substantially and still remains unknown, for this is like averring that colour is perceived while the eye is non-existent."⁵ Hence, the absolute reality must exist and knowable by direct experience for Śaṅkara".

As mentioned elsewhere, ontologically, Śaṅkara explains three different degrees of reality; they are *Prātibhasikā*, *Paramārthika* and *Vyāvahārika*. It clearly reflects that he is a *Paramārthavādi*. Also, according to the Kantian language, he is a noumenist. To be precise, he is a *Brahmāvādi*. *Prātibhasikā* and *Vyāvahārika* are real in its own realm but the sphere of *Vyāvahārika* is refuted when the sphere of *Paramārthika* is realized. Actually, in the sphere of *Prātibhasikā* and *Vyāvahārika*, we superimpose one thing or the attributes of one thing on another.⁶ In other words, we superimpose our experiences

⁵ Sankara's commentary on *Prasna Upanisad*, in *Eight Upanisads:with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*, VolII, trans. by Swami Gambhiranand, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 2001, 6.2, p. 483.

⁶ *Brahma-Sutra-bhasya* of Sankaracarya, trans.by Swami Gmbhirananda, Kolkata, Advait Ashram, 2009, Introduction, Section I, p. 2.

on *Brahman*. The things which we superimpose are called *visaya* or objects, and the things on which we superimpose are known as *āsraya* or substratum. The superimposed object is real during the illusion and when it's on the ground it is known as reality of superimposed objects, it transforms as illusion. Therefore, when we realize the sphere of *Paramārthika* as the ground of *Prātibhasikā and Vyāvahārika*, the latter ground transforms as illusion and *Paramārthika* remains as the Ultimate reality. Thus *Prātibhasikā and Vyāvahārika* are real only in its own realm but *Paramārthika* is absolute reality and when we realize it, *Prātibhasikā and Vyāvahārika* become unreal.

Therefore, we can say that Śaṅkara is not *Vyavahāravadi* or phenomenist but a *Paramārthavādi* or noumenist. In contrast, we observe that Kant is not only a noumenist but also a phenomenist. Noumenon and phenomenon are equally distinct spheres and exist independently. There is no interceding incumbent between them. Scientific knowledge is limited to the sphere of phenomenon only and it cannot interrupt within the realm of noumenon. The territory of noumenon is known as the realm of spirituality. Kant proposes intellectual intuition to realize the noumenon but this intuition is not possible in human being. Primarily, the issue of being a noumenist or phenomenist for Śaṅkara and Kant is depends on their fundamental concern which we stated above. Actually, in the possibility of knowledge of reality, *prāmana* and categories plays a very important role.

Part-II

3.2. Epistemological Status of Reality

In this section, I will critically expound and examine the nature and status of reality with reference to Śaṅkara's and Kant's epistemology. We know that *prāmānas* and categories act as a tool or instrument to arrive at knowledge in its true sense. Accurately, they are the valid means of acquiring knowledge. In Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophy, they seek to analyze the questions like what is real and what is unreal? What is in reality and what is in illusion? And how do we know that something exists or does not exist in this world?

Both the thinkers have the same answer: We know it only through the *pramānas* (Śaṅkara) and categories (Kant). According to Śaṅkara, when appearances grasp the form of mental mode of internal organ and *pramāna* are applied to it, they become reality as the object of experience world. In this manner, *pramānas* are taken as reality. Likewise, for Kant, the manifolds of sensible intuition which are not determined by the categories of understanding are the appearances. But, when appearances are thought as object, according to the unity of the categories, they become reality as phenomenon.

Śaṅkara views *Paramārthika* as the ground for *vyāvahāra*. *Paramārthika* is the realm of supreme reality and in this point of view, a phenomenon is unreal but from the empirical perspective, the world is real and we corresponds the objects in our day-to-day life. All our knowledge of empirical world is possible only through *prāmana* but these *prāmanas* are not applicable on ultimate reality and the realization of *Paramārthika* is not possible through it. Śaṅkara says that existence and non-existence of an object can be established only by the means of the *prāmanas*. If something exists or something does not exist here, we know it only through the *prāmanas*. Śaṅkara, in his *Pramānavichāra*, arises the question that how we know about the existence and non-existence of the things. If we prove the existence of things in the experience world by all the *prāmanas*, we cannot say that it does not exist.

All the *prāmanas* except *Śruti* are austere limited to *vyāvahāra* level. *Śruti* is applicable to the realm of *Paramārthika*. Śaṅkara says, “Wherever there is orderliness, purposiveness, motion or creation of some specific form, there is hidden presence of *Brahman*. This can be explained only by *Śruti*, other *prāmanas* cannot explain it.”⁷ After realization of Brahman, *Śruti*, like other *pramānas*, becomes illusory. *Śruti* is the only informative *prāmana*. It simply reminds us of ever-present fact, it does not create it. Thus, the realization of *Paramārthika* is out of sphere of *prāmanas*. Hence, the realization of the *Paramārthika* is out of the sphere of *prāmanas*. They are limited to the

⁷ Singh, R. P., “The Notion of Absolute”, in *Philosophical Consciousness and Scientific Knowledge: Conceptual Linkages and Civilizational Background*, ed. by D.P. Chattopadhyaya in association with A.K. Sen Gupta, N. Delhi, Centre for Studies in Civilization, 2004, p. 303.

sphere of phenomenal only. So, all our perceiving cognition is possible only through the *prāmanas*. Without *prāmanas* we are not capable to know anything in this world.⁸

The above-mentioned characteristics of *prāmanas* in Śaṅkara's philosophy are very near to Kant's features of categories. Śaṅkara's experience world is known as categorized knowledge in the Kantian terminology. According to Kant, the knowledge of a thing is possible only through the categories. To reiterate, the categories are limited to phenomenon only. It cannot be applied to noumenon because they cannot give us any sensible intuition. He states that noumenon is ground and cause of the phenomenon. Therefore, they exist and act on our sense through which manifold of sensible intuition is produced. But no categories can be applied to thing-in-itself. Further, Kant says, "they cannot, therefore, be viewed as applicable to thing-in-itself, independent of all questions as to whether and how those may be given to us...the only manner in which objects can be given to us is by modification of our sensibility and finally, that pure apriori concepts, in addition to the function of understanding expressed in the category ..."⁹

However, Kant's categories cannot be applied to thing-in-itself, but one of the *prāmanas* is applied to *Parmārthika*. So, both accepts that the *prāmanas* and categories do not applicable in the realm of higher reality. Śaṅkara maintains that *Paramārthika* is never experienced through *Śruti* or other means of knowledge, but we could experience the higher reality through pure intuition (*anubhava*). Thus, the higher reality is known for all. In Kant's philosophy, the categories of understanding can never be applied to thing-in-itself because it can never be given in our sensible intuition. Hence, it is unknown and unknowable for us.

From the above comparison, one can say that both Śaṅkara and Kant accept *prāmanas* and categories as a means of achieving valid knowledge, but they does not apply in the area of *Paramārthika* or noumenon. They are limited in the realm of *Vyāvahāra* or phenomenon and the knowledge of phenomenon world is possible only

⁸ Rao, V.N. Sheshagiri, *Vacaspati's Contribution to Advaita*, Mysore, Samvit Publishers, 1984, p. 18.

⁹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 54

through categories. Thus, on the one hand, Śaṅkara takes *prāmanas* as reality from the empirical point of view, and on the other, he holds that *prāmanas* are unreal from the Absolute point of view. The fundamental difference between Śaṅkara and Kant, concerning *prāmanas* and categories, is that Śaṅkara admits all *prāmanas* or means of knowledge are ultimately illusory and unreal because *Brahman* is the final reality. But, for Kant, categories are real.

Secondly, both the thinkers believe that *prāmanas* and categories are the means of acquiring knowledge and they are organized by consciousness. Śaṅkara says, ‘we know the things by consciousness through the means of *prāmanas*...’ any claim regarding affirmation or negation made for anything in the world presupposes evidence provided by consciousness by means of *prāmanas*. Not only that even that “ultimate presupposition of all *prāmanas* - perception, inference, verbal testimony etc. - is provided by consciousness but also by given consciousness, all *prāmanas* operate, in absence of consciousness no *prāmanas* operate.”¹⁰

Thus, all *prāmanas* are regulated by consciousness. Essentially, we know the things through *prāmana*, but we never know consciousness as an object. *Prāmanas* are not applicable to consciousness. According to Śaṅkara, consciousness is self-luminous and self-proved. Similarly, in Kant’s epistemology, the unity of pure apperception perceives all things and events in the form of space and time, and comprehends them under the categories of unity, reality, substantiality, causality etc. For Kant, consciousness constitutes the ultimate subject of knowledge. He says “the principle of apperception is the highest principle in the whole sphere of cognition.”¹¹ The unity of pure apperception is an awareness of an “I think”, or the thinking ego, which can be regarded as continuous, active and present in the series of representations only if the representations are given in a unity with one another through the thinking ego, but the

¹⁰ Sing, Raghendra Pratap, “The Notion of Absolute” *Philosophical Consciousness and Scientific Knowledge Conceptual Linkages and Civilizational Background*, ed. by D. P. Chattopadhyaya in association with A.K. Sen Gupta, N. Delhi, Centre for Studies in Civilization, 2004, p. 305.

¹¹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1973, p. 156.

judgment “I think”, contains no knowledge of the “I” because it can never be given in a sensible-intuition.

Like Śaṅkara, Kant also accepts that we cannot apply categories on unity of pure apperception and if we do so, there arise paralogisms which means invalid conclusion. With these paralogisms, Kant wants to prove that unity of pure apperception is unknown and unknowable. Hence, it is necessary to know the function of knowledge in Śaṅkara’s and Kant’s theory of knowledge¹²

Śaṅkara explains the actual nature of things through the function of knowledge. He says, “Options depend on human notions; whereas the valid knowledge of the true nature of a thing is not dependent on human notions.... Thus the validity of the knowledge, of an existing thing is determined by the thing in itself.”¹³ So, knowledge in Śaṅkara’s philosophy is objective. This is also a distinguishing feature which separates knowledge from action. It is action, he says, “which, being bound up with persons, may depend on place, time and circumstances.”¹⁴ An action is completely *puruṣatantram* which is relative to man while, knowledge is known as *vastutantram* which is relative to thing itself. Śaṅkara says, “Knowledge is not a mental action. Knowledge is, although mental, widely differs from meditation (*dhyāna*) and reflection because these processes are action.”¹⁵ *Upniṣada*, with all its varieties, is a kind of action. It is *puruṣatantram*. “Knowledge simply reveals reality but does not create it. It is informative not creative.”¹⁶

Nonetheless, Śaṅkara agrees with the fact that all our knowledge is independent of place, time, circumstances and causation and also that all knowledge is *vastutantram*.

¹² Singh, R.L., *An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Samkara*, Allahabad, Chugh Publications, 1978, pp. 22-28.

¹³ *Brahma-Śūtra-Bhāṣya of Sri Sankaracarya*, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 2009, 1.i.2., pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ “*Na deśakālanimittādyapekṣatvam*” in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkārācārya*, trans. by Swami Madhavananda, Calcutta, Ashrama, 1984, 4.5.15, p. 549.

¹⁵ *Nañu jñanam nanm mānasi kriya ..kriyā hi nām sa yatra vastusvarupanirapekṣāhva codyate, purusacittavaparadhina ca...dhyānam, cintām yadapi mānasam. Tathapi purused kartumakārtuman-yathā va kartum sakum, ,purusatantratvat...*” in *Brahma-Śūtra-Bhāṣya of SriSankaracarya*, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 2001,1.1.4, p. 34.

¹⁶ Singh, R. L., *An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Samkara*, Allahabad, Chugh Publications, 1978, p. 70.

He also differentiates the knowledge as universal and particular. Particular knowledge is related to individual substance, whereas the universal knowledge is concerned with the absolute and infinite. According to the above explanation, Śaṅkara makes difference between *viśeṣa vijñāna* and *nirviśeṣa vijñāna*, or *upādhi-viśiṣṭa vijñāna* and *sarvopādhivivarjita jñāna*. He says, "... one as possessed of the limiting adjunct constituted by the diversities of the universe which is a modification of name and form (*upādhi-viśiṣṭa*) and the other devoid of all conditioning factor (*sarvopādhivivarjita jñāna*) and opposed to the earlier."

In another way, particular knowledge means the knowledge of reality as determined by name and form, and universal knowledge is the knowledge of reality as such. This kind of knowledge is not limited and determined by any adjuncts. He says "it is only universal knowledge, which deserves the honorable title of universal knowledge and all other knowledge are only particular."¹⁷ Such a universal knowledge is also called as 'Samyak jñāna' (true illumination).'

Now, I shall compare Kant with Śaṅkara. After the analysis of apriori condition of knowledge, Kant assumes that the unconditioned is outside the periphery of knowledge. On contrary, Śaṅkara accepts that all knowledge is *vastutantram*, it is independent of place, time, circumstances, causation and different from action i.e., *puruṣatantram*. According to Śaṅkara, "if the proper *pramana* is adopted, we know not only the phenomenol reality but definitely comprehend the realm of noumenal reality also." Reason behind not comprehending the thing-in-itself and apprehending only the things as they appear to us, is due to the fact that we fail to realize the inner significance of things such as expressions of *Brahman* itself. If a person failed to know the reality then it is not due to the inner nature of knowledge, but it is due to inappropriate use of *pramānas* or means of knowledge.

The problem is not with the inherent nature of knowledge. When Kant suggests "faith' as an alternative to knowledge, it is simply a substitution of one *pramāna* by

¹⁷ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkārācārya*, trans. by Swami Madhavananda Calcutta, Ashrama, 1984, p. 34.

another *pramāna*. In fact, Kant could not realize the essential oneness of all knowledge. The duality of knowledge and faith shows a division in the field of knowledge itself. If Kant has realized this insight, he simply could not have propounded the unknowability or agnosticism concerning God, freedom and immortality of soul as the culmination of his rational enquiry. Śaṅkara says, “There is unity of knowledge but diversity of *pramānas* depends on the plurality of objects.”¹⁸

Part-III

3.3. Role of *Aprokshānubhūti* in Śaṅkara and Intellectual Intuition in Kant

To know ‘reality’ intuitive experience plays a significant part. Generally, the word ‘intuition’ means the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning. Precisely, intuition is regarded as a conscious commonality between worldly knowledge and the higher spiritual knowledge and it appears as flashes of illumination. However, it is viewed differently in Śaṅkara’s and Kant’s philosophy. My attempt, here, is to critically examine the position of intuition in the status of reality in their respective philosophies. Both, Śaṅkara and Kant, reject sensual conceptual process as an appropriate way of approaching reality. Śaṅkara realizes the ultimate reality or *Paramārthika* through the *Aprokshānubhūti* and Kant proposes intellectual intuition as the means of attaining noumenon.

As we have discussed, in Kant’s ontology, sensibilities and understanding are the two factors which constitute knowledge. They are the faculties of intuition and concepts respectively. Through intuition, objects are given and through concepts they are thought. Sensibility furnishes the manifold materials which are distributed in haphazard and unintelligible manner. While understanding unifying them, makes them intelligible. Kant says that both sensibility and understanding are important for each other - “Concepts

¹⁸ Singh, R. L., *An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Samkara*, Allahabad, Chugh Publications, 1978, p. 74.

without percepts are empty and percepts without concepts are blind.”¹⁹ Thus, knowledge shows a dualism of form and matter. Understanding receives sensible intuition through the proper channel of space and time. Space and time as an *apriori* form are always mind-dependent and subjective. Therefore, we know only phenomenon. Noumenon is independent of space and time where categories are not applicable. Thus, they remain unknown and unknowable.

We can only think of noumenon. Our knowledge of the phenomenon is possible through the sensibility and understanding. Kant proposes intellectual intuition to comprehend the realm of noumenon. Intellectual intuition is a special mode of non-sensible intuition and noumenon is its object. In Kant’s own words, noumenon is “an object of non-sensible intuition, we thereby presuppose a special mode of intuition namely, the intellectual.”²⁰ But human being can never possess this intellectual intuition, which comprehends noumenon. If Kant had grasped intellectual intuition, he would have forwarded his approach in the realm of the noumenon i.e., spirituality.

Kant accepts the possibility of intellectual intuition only in God. For him, divine cognition alone is spontaneous. He says, “Divine perception is original *intuitus originarius* as it is distinguished from derivative intuition or *intuitus derivation*.”²¹ On the basis of this explanation, it is well-defined that “such understanding is not sensuous, but intellectual; it is not derivative but original; the object itself is created in the act of intuition.”²² The object of divine perception does not come from an outside source but are created in the very act of perception. On the one hand, man’s perception is conditioned by the existence of object and on the other hand, God’s perception is creative.

By intellectual intuition, the mode of knowledge is understood as that which possesses no reciprocity, but entirely spontaneous. In intellectual intuition, “nothing is

¹⁹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1973, p. 50.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 268.

²¹ Ibid., 90.

²² N.K. Smith, *A Commentary to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979, p. 160.

received and the whole process is the act of the spirit. Their mind is not confronted with another world from which it is to receive its contents.”²³ “In intellectual intuition, mind is autonomous.”²⁴ Whereas, human being cannot recognize Kant’s noumenal concepts like God, immortality and freedom through intellectual intuition. Intellectual intuition can help to think noumenon. In this place, Śaṅkara suggests some positive corrective measures to the Kantian philosophy. According to Śaṅkara, “Absolute truth can be known and seen. He uses the testimony of the scripture not in the interest of dogmatic form of religion, as theology does, but in the interest of a real metaphysical knowledge which tolerates no dogma.”²⁵

According to Malkani, Kant puts a lot of emphasis upon the *aprioriness* of knowledge which is characterized by necessity and universality. He paid almost no attention to the realization of self as the sole and absolute reality in the intuitive awareness of any form of higher experience. To claim that noumenal concepts are postulation of ethics and morality, and are realized in practical reason is simply the denial of their philosophical awareness. Here, I will explain and examine the nature of Śaṅkara’s *Aprokshānubhūti*.

Śaṅkara accepts that *vastutantram* is the criteria of all knowledge; however, the means of knowledge are varied. According to him, “the means of knowledge are powerful in their respective spheres”²⁶ and “one means of knowledge does not contradict another, for it only tells us about those things that cannot be known by any other means.”²⁷ The metaphysics can attain its content only on the right use of the means of knowledge. Thus, Śaṅkara creates a clear distinction between reason and intuition, the

²³ Ermanno, Bencivenga, *Kant’s Copernican Revolution*, New York, Oxford University Press Ltd., 1987, p. 68.

²⁴ Singh, R. L., *An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Samkara*, Allahabad, Chugh Publications, 1978, p. 126.

²⁵ Malkani, G.R., “Vedantic Mysticism”, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol.XVIII. ,No. 1.1942 pp. 7-8.

²⁶ “Svaviṣayāsūraṇi hi pramānani...” in *the Brhadarānyaka Upanisad: with the commentary of Śaṅkaracārya*, trans. by Swami Madhavananda, Kolkata, Ashram, 2.1.20, p. 217.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.1.20, p. 209.

two different faculties having different scopes and functions – the one dealing with the relative and conditional knowledge, while the other with the absolute and unconditional one. Reason, therefore, is not competent to pronounce any judgment upon the affirmation of intuition. Primarily, Śaṅkara declares that Absolute reality can be realized through the pure intuition but not understood in the ordinary ratiocinative way.

He distinguished worldly perception from the knowledge of the ultimate reality. Sensuous perception is useless and incompetent to get the knowledge of reality which is beyond spatio-temporal determinations. He holds that *Brahman* has the nature of permanent existent reality that cannot be the object of sense perception and other means of knowledge. He explains “... Nor is *Brahman* has an object of perception, even though it stands as an established positive entity...”²⁸ Sense organs, the basis of all perceptions, cannot attain the reality because senses, by their very nature, reveal the external things and not ultimate reality. He again says *Brahman* is “outside the range of sense-perception. The senses naturally comprehend objects and not *Brahman*.”²⁹ It is *Anubhava* which alone can enable us to possess direct access to *Brahman* or the ultimate reality. Śaṅkara says “...personal valid means as far as possible; for the knowledge of *Brahman* culminates in experience and it relates to an existing entity.”³⁰

For Śaṅkara, *Anubhuti* means a complete and adequate apprehension of reality. The person who knows reality by such an intuition becomes reality itself. According to this statement, we can say that reality or *Brahman* is an integral and internal experience. This experience is all embracing and all comprehending. It realizes the self in everything and everything in the self. It realizes the presence of God in everything and everything in God. This is the knowledge of real as real. Human being can possess such an experience only through the unification of self with real. “The goal of all knowledge is *Anubhav* or

²⁸ *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* of Sri Sankaracarya, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 2009, 1.1.4, p. 16.

²⁹ Ibid., 1.i.2., p. 17.

³⁰ “*Anubhavavāsanātvāt bhūtavastu viśayatvācca brahmajñānasya.*” Ibid., 1.i.2., p. 16.

direct apprehension.”³¹ *Anubhav* can be achieved by only those, “who have no name and no form, because it is beyond speech and language and it is an idea of *Brahman*.”³²

If we compare the status of reality as *Anubhuti* and intellectual intuition in Śaṅkara’s and Kant’s philosophy, we observe that, for Śaṅkara, *Anubhuti* means the knowledge of supreme reality. Likewise, Kant also accepts intellectual intuition as a medium of the direct cognition of the noumenal reality. But he asserts that “this kind of intuition is not possible in human being. Humans can grasp only empirical intuition which cannot be interrupted behind the appearances of the thing-in-itself. Our worldly perception is derivative because it depends on the existence of the object.”³³ Thus, it is possible only when our perceptive consciousness is affected by the presence of the object outside us. Here, Śaṅkara and Kant, both accept that the knowledge of ultimate reality is not possible through sensuous intuition. Śaṅkara says *Brahman* is “outside the range of sense perception. The senses naturally comprehend objects, and not *Brahman*.”³⁴

However, in contrast, Śaṅkara also says that the *vedic ṛṣiṣ* realize the supreme reality in the state of *Samyak jñāna* or personal experience. They are “the valid means as far as possible; for the knowledge of *Brahman* culminates in experience.”³⁵ He believes that man is capable of having the cognition of his own self i.e., *Sat, Cit and Ānanda*. The self is identical to *Brahman* and *Brahman* is the self of everyone. Perception is the basic means of knowledge, though the perception may be either sensuous or non-sensuous (or spiritual). The objects of the phenomenal world are known by the sensuous perception, contrary to it, the demand of the knowledge of spirituality, i.e. *Paramārthika*, require spiritual perception. Śaṅkara calls this spiritual perception as *Aprokshānubhūti*.

³¹ *Upanishads in Sankara's Own Words (Chhandogya)*, Vol. III, trans. by V. Panoli, Calicut, Mathrubhumi Printing and Pub. Co. Ltd., 1994, 6.1.15, pp. 556-557

³² *Ibid.*, 1.1.2., p. 25.

³³ Paton, H.J., *Kant Metaphysics of Experience*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd 1961, p. 436.

³⁴ *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Sri Sankaracarya*, trans by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 2009, 1.1.4, p. 16-17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.1.2, p. 16.

Śaṅkara maintains the relation of identity between *Brahman* and *Ātman*. Human being, while trying to know *Brahman*, actually knows his own self, his own *Ātman*. It is the essence of all the *vedic* text that we are nothing but *Ātman*. The *Brahman* is always “undiminishing, eternal, that is the undecaying... unchanging, permanent, and beginning less, cause...”³⁶ However; Kant does not mention any internal relation between man and God. For him, man and God belong to two completely separate realms and what is privilege for the God is unknown for the man. As a result, he maintained the view that God knows the noumenon through intellectual intuition and man can manage to have an access to it only through faith. But this duality of intellectual intuition and faith does not have any place in Śaṅkara’s philosophy. For him, there is only one way to experience supreme reality i.e., the realization of *Brahman* and we can realize it through direct cognition which means *Aprokshānubhūti*.

In this manner, Kant accepts “the knowledge of God, freedom and soul as postulates of morality. Actually, intellectual intuition and faith are completely different expressions for one and the same thing; the same noumenal reality is known to God through intellectual intuition and revealed to man through faith.”³⁷ Likewise, Śaṅkara says that *Anubhava* is the means to the knowledge of Self. The self is not a subject, in a sense; it is an agent of the activity of knowledge, as distinguishing from the act of knowing and the object of knowledge. Thus, here, we can say that Kant consequently creates the duality between intellectual intuition and faith, whereas Śaṅkara holds that there is no duality between man and God. The final criterion of supreme reality is one’s own intuitive experience or *Aprokshānubhūti*.

³⁶ Sankara’s commentary on *Kātha Upanisad*, in *Eight Upanisads: with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*, Vol.I, trans. by Swami Gambhiranand, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 2001, 1.3.15, p. 177.

³⁷ Allison, H.E., *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism*, London, Yale University Press, 1983, p. 272.

Part-IV

3.4. Status of Reality in terms of *Sākṣin* and Self

Our knowledge of phenomenal world is possible only through the *pramānas* and categories of understanding which are operated by consciousness. Consciousness is a necessary condition of our knowledge. Without consciousness we cannot know anything. Consciousness, in its own nature, is witness self in Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophy. Śaṅkara designates it as *Sākṣin* and Kant takes it as a transcendental unity of self-consciousness. So far as the knowledge of self is concerned, there is a significant similarity between Śaṅkara and Kant.

The common structure of consciousness, as Kant designates it as “transcendental unity of self-consciousness”³⁸, consists of ‘forms of intuition’ and ‘forms of understanding’, which are not static forms but forms of operation that exist only in the act of apprehending and comprehending sensibility. The forms of intuition (space and time) synthesize the manifold of sensibility into spatio-temporal order and by virtue of the categories; they are brought to universal and necessary relation of cause and effect, substance, reciprocity and so on. The entire complex is unified in the transcendental apperception. In the synthetic unity of apperception, according to Kant, ‘I am consciousness of myself’ is not as ‘I appear to myself’ and it is also not as ‘I am in myself’, but only ‘I am’. The ‘I think’ must be, Kant insists, capable of accompanying all ‘my representations’. If we try to apply the categories, such as substance, existence, person, etc., to the ‘I think’, we come across a “series of paralogisms.”³⁹

This, Kant's view of Self, is very close to the *Advaitic* theory of Soul developed by Śaṅkara. Kant has worked on the same position which had inspired Śaṅkara to draw from the *Upanisads* that ‘How can you know that which is the knower of everything.’

³⁸ Singh, R.P., *Kant and Hegel: Methodology, Ontology, Epistemology. Dialectic and Ought*, New Delhi, Galaxy Publications, 1990, p. 20.

³⁹ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1973, p. 130.

The categories of understanding can be applied to objects given in sensible intuitions. Generic unity, specific difference, act, quality, relation, etc., are supposed by Śaṅkara to be the ultimate condition of knowledge. This is the first time in European philosophy that a view of the self-approximating to the *Advaitic* doctrine of the self was so clearly formulated. The credit goes to Kant, to have it conceived so clearly that the Self is not to be identified with the individual. Self involved in the subject-object dualism. The Self is the universal principle of consciousness or thought, which is the pure or the transcendental subject as distinguished from the empirical subject and that this subject itself cannot be known as an object of knowledge.

From the above discussion, it can be observed that the Kant's theory of Self is same as *Upanisadic* view which is expressed in the words as 'How can you know that which is the knower of everything'. The Self cannot be dislodged from its pivotal position as a knower. It can never be shifted from the center to the periphery, because in every attempt to do so, we shall be compelled to put it back again into the center under the force of logical necessity. The upshot is that it will remain there in the center and it can never be the knower and the known simultaneously. That, which we must presuppose as the precondition of all knowledge, cannot itself become an object of knowledge.

The basic purpose of Kant's philosophy is to present an effective solution to Hume's skepticism. The first Critique with the transcendental deduction of categories tries to 'justify the claims of science philosophically' or 'to provide a philosophical basis for physical science.' Kant tries to prove the possibility of scientific knowledge in the world of phenomenon. And in this way, he scratches the view that the scientific knowledge is possible only in the sphere of phenomenon and it cannot interfere in the realm of noumenon, i.e., spirituality. Scientific knowledge is possible by the application of the categories of understanding.

These categories are not applied to the noumenal entities, i.e. God, immortality and freedom, including consciousness. So, it remains unknown and unknowable as an object. As opposed to this, the primary motive of Śaṅkara is to establish the *Advaita* philosophy. And for getting this philosophical approach, he proceeds from *Vyāvahārika*

level to *Paramārthika* level. When he find this destination, he realizes the self-shining character of the pure *cit* and consequently, placing it far beyond the ambit of inference and reasoning. Kant appears to be more interested in the organization of the experience inspite of the agency which organizes it. But Śaṅkara shows much more interest in the revelatory consciousness than the objects which are revealed by the consciousness.

Further, both have accepted the view that the consciousness is the center of our knowledge-situation. Without consciousness, no knowledge of objects is possible. We know the objects through the *pramānas* or categories which are operated by the consciousness. Without consciousness, no *pramānas* and no categories can operate. Consciousness is the witness in its nature. Śaṅkara calls it as *Sākṣin* and Kant designates it as transcendental unity of self-consciousness.

According to Śaṅkara, *Sākṣin* is the witness self and presents in all the levels of experience. It is the presupposition of knowledge and experience. It is the pure subject and unknowable as an object. It is self-luminous and self-proved. It illuminates all the objects presented to it. Kant, like Śaṅkara, accepts the view that the unity of apperception or transcendental unity of self-consciousness is ever conscious principle and its consciousness is not a product of the subject-object dualism. It is the consciousness of the pure subject. The pure subject or pure consciousness is the logical presupposition of the knowledge of the objects. Kant says that ‘I think’ is capable of accompanying with all our representation.

As for Śaṅkara, he maintains that *Sākṣin* is present in all our experience and knowledge between the three stages of consciousness. Kant also follows this view because his transcendental consciousness, in its witnessing nature, provides the ultimate unity between sensibility and understanding. He says, “The transcendental unity of apperception...relates to the pure synthesis of imagination, as an apriori condition of the possibility of all combination of the manifold in knowledge.”⁴⁰ Consciousness, thus, is

⁴⁰ Kant, I., *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans.by N.K. Smith, London, The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1973, p. 143.

present in all our experience and knowledge, and provides unity between knowledge-fluctuations.

Further, Śaṅkara contemplates the view that beyond all the physical and psychical condition and fluctuation, *Sākṣin*, as a witness consciousness, maintains our identity, knowledge and experience. All the objects are changeable but witness self is unchangeable and permanent, because it maintains our knowledge and experience. We can also find this view of Śaṅkara in Kant, when he says, “there can be in us no mode of knowledge with one another, without that unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuition, and by relation to which representation of object is alone possible. This pure, original, unchangeable consciousness, I shall name transcendental apperception.”⁴¹ Thus, Śaṅkara and Kant conclude that self-consciousness, in its own nature, is the witness, subjective, present in all our experience and knowledge and unites it. It is the presupposition of all knowledge.

Śaṅkara and Kant state that consciousness cannot be known as an object through the senses and mind. Śaṅkara expounds that self can never become an object as it is beyond the reach of the sense. It is realized through the pure intuition. Therefore, for Śaṅkara, *Sākṣin* or Self is not unknown. In Kant’s view, the categories of understanding are applied to it, there arise paralogism, by which, he means, “formally invalid conclusions”⁴² and they are namely, (i) that the soul is a substance, (ii) that it is a simple, (iii) that it is a person, and (iv) that it is in relation to possible objects in space. These are the four kinds of paralogisms through which Kant attempts to prove that the unity of apperception is unknown and unknowable.

When we evaluate the transcendental unity of self-consciousness in Kant, and consciousness as witnessing *Sākṣin* or self in Śaṅkara, we find that Kant’s transcendental consciousness is not self-evident. But, for Śaṅkara, *Sākṣin* or self is self-evident. It is not established by extraneous proofs. It is not possible to deny the *Ātman*, because it is the

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 136.

⁴² Singh, R.P., *A Critical Examination of Immanuel Kant’s Philosophy*, New Delhi, Intellectual Pub., 1987, p. 101.

very essence of the one who denies it. *Ātman* is the basis of all kinds of knowledge, presuppositions and proofs. It is everywhere – it is with; it is without; it is before; it is behind; it is on the right; it is on the left; it is above and it is below. In fact, the self-luminous *Cit* of the Vedanta does not admit even the transcendental proof. ‘How can that by which all the *pramānas* are established, be itself establish by the *pramānas*?’ Śaṅkara says “...it being self-establish. For the self of any one does not require to be revealed to any one with the help of any other means. For such means of knowledge as perception etc., that is taken up for proving the existence of other things that remain unknown, belong to this very self.”⁴³

Thus, the transcendental method of Kant cannot establish the Self or *Ātman* like *Advaita* philosophy. S.K. Das says, “With all his emphasis on the objective side, Kant could not...secure an independent status for the self. It might be contended, however, that the self or subject in the Kantian analysis of the epistemological situation is only a thought or the logical concept merely, and to present it as an entity or soul substance is a ‘paralogism of pure reason.’ The transcendental unity of apperception was thus seized on its metaphysical side by Fichte, not as a fact but as an act... and by the semi-Kantians and Neo-Kantians of the Marburg School on the psychological side and presented as pure activity.”⁴⁴ According to Śaṅkara’s philosophy, the Self reveals and manifests itself in dreamless sleep. The dreamless sleep “probably appeared too slippery a ground for Kant, and as he preferred to stick to his transcendental unity of apperception - the ‘dark lantern’ that illumines the whole world except itself.”⁴⁵ This very self is the Absolute of Śaṅkara, which no one can deny. It is the pre-established ground of all proof and disproof as well, though it cannot be known in the same way in which the object is known. A.C.Mukerji says, “The Absolute is like the light which manifests all objects, and which, consequently, does not require another light for its own revelation.”⁴⁶

⁴³ *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya*, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, Kolkata, Advaita Ashrama, 2009, II.iii.7., p. 455.

⁴⁴ Das, S.K., *A Study of the Vedanta*, Calcutta, University of Calcutta, 1937, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁴⁶ Mukerji, A.C., *The Nature of Self*, Allahabad, The Indian Press Ltd., 1943, p. 309.

From the above comparison, we can summarise that, Śaṅkara and Kant deal the same problem - what is the possibility, the validity and limitation of our knowledge. For Kant, man has only sensuous intuition. Man can know the things as they appear to him but he can never know what they are themselves. In other words, noumenon is unknown and unknowable for man because there is no possibility of intellectual intuition in man. Kant denies its existence in man and accepts its possibility in God. In Śaṅkara's philosophy, *Aprokshānubhūti* is the only medium for realizing the supreme reality. According to Śaṅkara, through *Anubhava*, we are not only in the position of realization of the *Brahman*, but we also become *Brahman*. *Anubhava* successfully grasps the supreme reality in the form of *Brahman or Atman*.

Thus, in Śaṅkara's philosophy, reality is not beyond the experience, whereas for Kant, we are not able to know the reality through intellectual intuition. If we try to apply the categories to it, there arise paralogsms. In epistemology, both the thinkers accept that *pramānas* and categories are the valid means of knowledge of reality. *Pramānas* and categories are required to justify what is unreal and what is real. Without the function of these elements we cannot know the actual nature of the objects. Further, Kant believes that the knowledge involves both sensation and conception. Similarly, Śaṅkara propounded that our perceptual knowledge is constructed by the senses and mind.

Śaṅkara takes the realms of *Paramārthika* and *Vyavahārika* as reality of higher and lower level. It is Absolute reality in the case of the former and empirical reality in the case of the latter. He draws a distinction between higher and lower levels of reality from the epistemological point of view. But from the metaphysical point of view, there is no separation between *Paramārthika* and *Vyavahārika*. In contrast, Kant, neither from the epistemological nor from the ontological points of view, differentiates reality as the higher and lower levels or absolute reality and empirical reality. Even he does not apply

the term 'reality' for the realm of noumenon. According to him, reality is a concept under the category of Quality which constitutes an affirmative judgment.

Śaṅkara and Kant accept *Sākṣin* and Self as the presupposition of all our experience and knowledge. For Śaṅkara, *Sākṣin* is the witness self and presents in all the levels of realities. It illuminates all the objects presented to it. It is the pure subject and unknowable as an object. Here, Kant also agrees with Śaṅkara. He accepts that the unity of pure apperception or transcendental unity of self-consciousness is the pure subject and logical presupposition of the knowledge of objects. It unites all the manifolds which are given in perception. Kant's transcendental consciousness is not self-evident, whereas, for Śaṅkara, *Sākṣin* or self is self-evident (*Svatah siddha*). It is not established by extraneous proofs. It is not possible to deny the Atman, because it is the very essence of the one who denies it.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, I have tried to analyse, discuss and compare the status of 'Reality' in the philosophy of Śaṅkara and Kant. Reality is a very complex and comprehensive concept. It includes everything which subsists permanently. It is consistent, immutable and eternal. It is viewed differently in Indian and Western philosophical traditions. The former delineates reality as an ultimate objective of human life as it is intimately connected with the notion of liberation. The latter explicates reality more in the ontological terms which exist by itself and the existence of which does not need the existence of anything else. Despite the differences, both the traditions believe that the reality is something which is eternal, immutable, infinite, etc. Reality can be understood through various points of views, such as, social, political, religious, ethical, psychological, philosophical and so on.

The nature of reality opens up vast range of vexed questions before us. And, in order to find answers for the same, I have explored the concept of reality in Śaṅkara's and Kant's philosophy historically and philosophically. Throughout the work, I have mainly focused on the concept of reality and its status within the framework of ontology and epistemology. It is clear that both the thinkers borrowed their concept of reality from their predecessors' thoughts. Śaṅkara has drawn it from *Prasthānatraya* as well as from *Sāṃkhya* and *Mādhyamika Sūnyavāda* philosophy. Likewise, Kant also greatly influenced by philosophers like Descartes, Hume, Locke and Newton. However, both the thinkers developed it in their own ways.

Philosophically, both the thinkers accept that reality is something which is beyond this phenomenal world. Śaṅkara explains it in terms of *Paramārthika*. In Kant's terminology it is noumenon where categories and *pramānas* cannot interfere. For Śaṅkara, this *Paramārthika* is known through *aprokshanubhuti*, whereas for Kant it is unknown and unknowable. It creates dualism in Kant's philosophy. Thus, both the thinkers agree similarly in a few aspects and also differ considerably. In the course of the

above philosophical analysis of Śaṅkara and Kant, I have tried to bring out the similarities and differences by comparison of their status of reality. While doing so, I have proposed to use *Advaitic* perspective to provide solutions to the differences that had arisen in the issues.

I have explained and elaborated Śaṅkara's status of reality within the framework of ontology/metaphysics and epistemology. He describes ontological/metaphysical status of reality in terms of *vivartvāda*, *pañcakoṣas*, *avasthātraya*, *sākṣichaitanya*, *mokṣa* and *Brahman*. The causal theory of *Advait vedānta* is known as *satakāryavāda*; particularly, *Brahman - vivartvāda* which means only cause (*Brahman*) is real and whereas the effect is the projection of its cause. *Pañcakoṣas* (five sheaths), namely *Annamaya koṣa*, *Prānamaya koṣa*, *Manomaya koṣa*, *Vijñānamaya koṣa* and *Ānandamaya koṣa*, is the evolution of consciousness. He explicates the status of reality as consciousness in terms of *Avasthātraya* i.e. *jāgrat*, *svapna* and *suṣupti* (the three stages of Consciousness). Consciousness irradiates all the objects that may be illusory and actual, whether it is in waking, dreaming or deep sleep stage.

The Consciousness is the witness of all the stages. Śaṅkara defines it as *sākṣichaitanya*, which is ever-present and unchanging entity. But this Consciousness cannot be known through external experiences. We can know it only at fourth stage, i.e. *Turiya*. It is the state of Absolute reality and *Ātman* or *Brahman*. When individual comes to realize his true nature, i.e., *Ātman*, he is liberated from the worldly bondage, away from all the suffering. In *vedānta*, this stage is known as reality in terms of *Mokṣa*. He elaborates reality as *Brahman* in terms of *Sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* and *Satya*, *Jñāna*, *Ananta*. *Sat*, *cit*, *ānanda* are not the qualities of *Brahman*, although they all denotes one and the same entity. Similarly, *Satya*, *Jñāna*, *Ananta* contain three different senses of reality, though they are separate among themselves, but they are related to reality as *Brahman* and presents its characteristics.

Brahman is described in two ways, i.e. higher reality and lower reality. Higher reality is the level of *Nirguṇa Brahman* and the lower reality is level of *Saguṇa Brahman*.

Nirguṇa Brahman is indescribable. The best description of it is through the negative formula of *Neti-Neti* or ‘Not this Not this’. Śaṅkara also distinguishes three levels of reality, namely, ultimate reality (*Pāramārthika*), phenomenal reality (*Vyāvahārika*) and imaginary reality (*Prāthibhāsika*). Ultimate reality is *Brahman* which is beyond our senses, thought and language. This is a *Pāramārthika* level of reality. *Prāthibhāsika* is real during illusion and it does not exist when we see empirical thing as its ground and *Vyāvahārika* is real as long as we perceive it through our senses and mind, and it becomes illusory when *Pāramārthika* is realized.

Śaṅkara defines the epistemological status of reality with reference to *antaḥkaraṇa*, *Pramāna vyavasthā* or valid means of attaining knowledge and *anirvacaniya khyātivada*. *Antaḥkaraṇa* is the inherent, innate tendencies of human being. It receives and arranges what is conveyed to it through the senses. It makes possible for a person to come in to contact with the world around him. Ultimate reality is comprehended by means of *Pramāna*. The existence and non-existence of a thing can be established only by means of *Pramāna*. Śaṅkara accepts six means of knowledge through which our knowledge of empirical and transcendental world is possible. They are *Pratyakṣa* (Perception), *Anumāna* (Inference), *Upamāna* (Comparison), *Arthāpatti* (Postulation), *Anupalabdhi* (Non-apprehension), and *Śabda* (Verbal Testimony). The erroneous knowledge of object is called *khayti*. Śaṅkara’s theory of *khayti* is called *Anirvacniya khayti*, which means erroneous knowledge is indescribable. Śaṅkara believes objects are neither *sat* nor *asat*. According to this theory, illusion consists in the superimposition of one thing or characteristic of one thing on another.

In Kant’s philosophy, reality can be understood within the framework of epistemology and ontology/metaphysics. In epistemology, he accepts the concept of reality as a category under affirmative judgment through which we proceed towards phenomenal knowledge. In order to achieve this kind of knowledge, two factors play a very important role. They are sensibility and understanding. Only with the combination of these two factors we can acquire the knowledge of perceiving world. In this manner, the claims of rationalists and empiricists that knowledge can only be achieved through

reason and through senses is falsified. But sensibility only gives us blind facts. There is an a priori forms called space and time through which these facts posited and ordered and becomes the object of knowledge. Further, Kant says that these sensations are meaningless. In order to give meaning to them, we require categories of understanding. But the categories need transcendental schema to connect with the manifold of sensibility which makes our knowledge universal and necessary.

Moreover, Kant says transcendental imagination also combines sensibility with category in a single space and time. However, he does not consider imagination as a final faculty of knowledge. He says that the transcendental consciousness provides an ultimate unity between sensibility and understanding. This kind of consciousness is known as “I think” consciousness, which he calls it as a transcendental unity of pure apperception. It is the ultimate subject of knowledge and the knower. Kant also recognizes three areas of traditional metaphysics where knowledge cannot penetrate. They are Rational Psychology, Rational Cosmology and Rational Theology. In this manner, Kant proves the possibility and limitation of human knowledge.

In the ontological framework, Kant has discussed the concept of reality as noumenon and phenomenon. The concept of noumenon and phenomenon are completely opposite to each other. He views noumenon from a spiritual realm, which is independent from the category of understanding. However, a phenomenon is the sphere of actual and possible scientific knowledge wherein the categories have their applicability. According to him, this noumenon is the limitation of human knowledge which can only be imagined but cannot be known.

Further, Kant used noumenon in two senses - positive and negative. The positive sense can be known only through intellectual intuition. In contrast, the unknown form of noumenon is its negative sense. He considers noumenon as a limiting concept because it limits the sphere of human understanding and brings its concepts like the concept of God, soul and freedom of will into the realm of morality.

When we develop a comparison and contrast between Śaṅkara and Kant regarding the concept of reality, we observed that both the thinkers contemplate the same problem that how we know the reality. And how can we achieve the reality. According to Śaṅkara, we know the reality of *vyavahārika* through *aṅtahakaranas*. Śaṅkara says that our perceptual knowledge is constructed by senses and mind. Similarly, Kant, in western philosophy, says that knowledge involved both sensations and conception. Further, *pramānas* in Śaṅkara and categories in Kant are required to justify what is illusory and what is reality. Through the function of *pramānas* and categories we can proceed from worldly reality to Absolute reality.

Śaṅkara takes the realm of *vyavahārika* and *pāramārthika* as reality of higher and lower levels. It is ultimate reality in the case of former and empirical reality in the case of latter. In contrast, Kant does not differentiate reality between the higher and lower level or ultimate and empirical reality. Even he does not apply the term 'reality' for the realm of noumenon. According to him, reality is a concept under the category of quality which constitutes an affirmative judgment. So, Śaṅkara makes a distinction between *vyavahārika* and *pāramārthika*, same as Kant makes a distinction between noumenon and phenomenon. Both the thinkers believe that *pāramārthika* and noumenon can be known through intuition. Śaṅkara accepts that only through the *Aprokshānubhūti* we can know the reality, whereas, for Kant, noumenon is unknown and unknowable for man because there is no possibility of intellectual intuition in man. Further, he denies its existence in man and accepts its possibility in God.

On the basis of above arguments, I shall conclude that Śaṅkara has successfully removed the dualism in reality. However, Kant creates dualism between phenomenon and noumenon, knowledge and faith, known and unknown. By removing all the distinctions and dualities, Śaṅkara finds the final destination of life as *Jivan mukti*. But Kant failed to realize the noumenal entity, which is called as *Ātman or Brahman* in *Advaita Vedanta*. Instead Kant proposes intellectual intuition as the means of achieving the noumenal or highest reality which man can never comprehend. So, he draws his philosophical

conclusion as unknown and unknowable. Here, we can suggest an *Advaitic* view for Kantian philosophy to remove these dualisms. And in this way, we can give perfection to Kant's critical philosophy. Kant's supposition of knowledge is dependent on the sensibility and understanding, entails the concept of noumenon. This creates the dualism in Kant's critical philosophy. For Śaṅkara, real knowledge of the reality does not require the mediation of categories. According to him, through *Aprokshānubhūti*, the real knowledge of the world is possible. This shows the difference in the approach on understanding the status of reality by both the philosophers.

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