CHAPTER 3

ŚAŃKARA AND KANT ON APPEARANCE AND REALITY:
A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

I, in this chapter, shall propose to develop a comparative and critical study of the nature and status of appearance and reality in Śaṅkarācārya and Immanuel Kant. One of the most philosophic problem in epistemology is the distinction between appearance and reality. Philosophers from the East as well as from the West discuss the significance of this problem and have tried to resolve it. In the Indian tradition, Śaṅkara, in his philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, has made a distinction between vyāvahārika sat and Paramārthika sat whereas Kant has made a distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. I shall try to deal with the problem of the distinction between appearance and reality within these two traditions. I am not simply going to develop a comparison and contrast between Śaṅkara and Kant, but my attempt will be to show that the argument of Śaṅkara and Kant regarding appearance and reality are supplemented by each other. My comparative and critical study of appearance and reality shall be focused within the framework of ontology, metaphysics and epistemology of Śaṅkara and Kant. I propose to discuss it under the following heads:

1. Appearance with reference to antahkarana in Śaṅkara and sensibility in Kant.

2. Reality with reference to the role of pramāṇa in Śaṅkara and Categories in Kant.

3. Reality as Paramārthika and vyāvahārika Sat vis-à-vis Noumenon and Phenomenon.

4. Reality as Anubhava in Śaṅkara and Noumenon as Intellectual Intuition in Kant.
5. Reality as Self or Sāksin in Śaṅkara and Self as a Paralogism in Kant.

In ontology and metaphysics, I would like to compare Kant’s noumenon and phenomenon with Śaṅkara’s Paramārthika and vyāvahārika sat. In epistemology, I shall compare antahkarana in Śaṅkara and sensibility in Kant, role of pramāṇas in Śaṅkara and role of categories in Kant, Anubhava (pure intuition) in Śaṅkara and intellectual intuition in Kant and finally Śaṅkara’s Self as Saksin and Kant’s self as a paralogism. First of all, I shall compare and contrast appearance with reference to antahkarana in Śaṅkara and sensibility in Kant.

4.1. APPEARANCE WITH REFERENCE TO ANTAKARANA IN ŚAŃKARA AND SENSIBILITY IN KANT:

Śaṅkara and Kant consider the same question in their epistemology: how our knowledge of the phenomena is possible or, how appearances transform into reality. We find that both have the same answer. In their answer, we find the nature and status of appearance and reality. Perception (pratyakṣa), according to Śaṅkara, is either indeterminate (nirvikalpa) or determinate (savikalpa). We know that these two are the earlier and later stage in the same complex process of perception. The former is not associated with a name and latter is well defined. In nirvikalpa pratyakṣa, we have merely the sensation of the object and, in this stage, the internal organ (antahkarana) and their mode (vṛtti) do not function. Therefore, we have only the appearance of the object. But in savikalpa pratyakṣa, these sensation becomes the form of mental mode (vṛtti) of internal organ (antahkarana). Here, we have the knowledge of the object. In this state, sensible appearances transform into reality, i.e., objects exist in phenomenal world. Advaita recognizes the fundamental fact about knowledge which is said to be the distinct contribution to Kant to Western philosophy that knowledge involves both sensation and conception. But hundreds of years ago from Kant, Indian
philosophers propounded that our perceptual knowledge is constructed by the senses and mind.

According to Kant, percepts without concepts are blind and concepts without percepts are empty. Perception is a complex process of experience involving both sensation and conception. All perception, we have, is determinate perception (sāvikālpa pratyakṣa) because it is perceptual knowledge or perceptual judgment. According to Śaṅkara, if we have bare sensations of the object, it is indeterminate perception (nirvikālpa pratyakṣa). It is only the appearance of an object. In the state of indeterminate perception (nirvikālpa pratyakṣa), the organ of perception is involved but the internal organs (antahkarāṇaḥ) are absent. So we cannot comprehend the nature and status of the object which is in front of us and we have merely the appearance of the object or the sensation of the object. Here, the form of mental mode (vṛtti) of internal organs (antahkarāṇaḥ) do not apply on these sensations. When these sensations grasp the form of mental mode of internal organ, it comes to us as real object. It is called determinate perception (sāvikālpa pratyakṣa). In this regard, Śaṅkara says, “A thing is cognized only by the mind and the senses.”\(^1\) In Kant’s epistemological situation, the manifold of sensible intuitions, in so far as they are not determined by the categories of understanding, are the “appearance.”\(^2\) In Advaitic terminology these appearances are called indeterminate perception (nirvikālpa pratyakṣa). The appearances or sensibilities which are not determined by the categories of understanding and posited and ordered in space and time are called by Kant as ‘brute facts’, ‘blind’ and chaotic. The blindness of appearances mean their meaninglessness. In order to give meaning to them, what is required to be done is to determine them under one or more of the categories of


understanding. But when they are determined in accordance with the unity of
categories of understanding, they become phenomena which is called by
Śaṅkara as determinate perception (savikalpa pratyakṣa). For Śaṅkara, the
consciousness of the 'that' (nirvikalpa) is not yet determined by the
consciousness of the 'what' (savikalpa), the 'substance' cannot be known apart
from its 'qualities'. For example, we see in dust a straight something lying on
the road and find out by going near it that it is a rope. The earlier stage is
merely the appearance of the object, i.e. indeterminate perception (nirvikalpa
pratyakṣa). It is bare sensation without determined by the categories of
understanding. And latter one is the real knowledge of the perception of the
object, i.e., determinate perception (savikalpa pratyakṣa). It is the object
determined by the categories of understanding. In our knowledge-situation,
indeterminate perception (nirvikalpa pratyakṣa) presents the bare object
without its qualities. But in determinate perception (savikalpa pratyakṣa), we
relate the object with its qualities. Hence, all our perceptual being is
determinate (savikalpa) and it is a perceptual judgement. If we separate
indeterminate (nirvikalpa pratyakṣa) from determinate perception (savikalpa
pratyakṣa), we would have only the appearance of the object and in this
situation, we shall not be able to grasp the qualities of the object. The
separation between them comes only in our thought and not in reality. Kant,
like Śaṅkara, appears to adopt this knowledge situation in his epistemology.
According to Kant, the categories of understanding can provide only the form
of object and the content is given by the sensible intuitions. Without sensible
intuitions, the apriori concepts are empty. At the same time, without the apriori
concepts sensibility is blind or concepts without percepts are empty and
percepts without concepts are blind. In Kant's words, "... thought without
content are empty and intuitions without concepts are blind." The blindness
of sensible intuitions, which Śaṅkara calls as indeterminate perception
(nirvikalpa pratyakṣa), mean their meaninglessness. In order to give them
meaning, they have to be determined by the categories and it is called by

3 Ibid., p. 93.
Śaṅkara as determinate perception (savikalpa pratyakṣa). If we see only ‘white moving object’ which is far from us, it is merely the blindness of sensible intuition (nirvikalpa pratyakṣa). In other words, it is merely appearance of the object. But when this object comes near us, we see it as ‘white cow.’ It is the object which is determined by the categories. It is determinate perception (savikalpa pratyakṣa). Here the object grasps the form of mental mode (vṛtta) of internal organ (antahkarana). In Kant’s philosophy, it is categorized knowledge. ‘This is a white cow’ is a perceptual judgement. Hence, as in Śaṅkara, a object is known through the mind and senses, like this, in Kant, the sensibility and understanding are the two factors that constitute our knowledge. Kant says, “Our knowledge springs from two fundamental sources of mind, the first is the capacity of receiving the representations, the second is the power of knowing an object through these representations.”

Thus, we find that there is no problem of appearance and reality in epistemology of Śaṅkara and Kant. They successfully remove this dichotomy. Śaṅkara solves this problem through determinate perception (savikalpa pratyakṣa) in which internal organ (antahkarana) and the form of mental mode (vṛtta) are involved. Whereas, Kant removes this duality through sensibility and understanding. Our knowledge is possible not only through the internal organ (antahkarana) or sensible intuitions but it is necessary the involvement of the function of pramāṇas in Śaṅkara and the categories of understanding in Kant also. Let us take up the nature and status of reality with reference to the role of pramāṇas in Śaṅkara and role of categories in Kant.

4.2. REALITY WITH REFERENCE TO THE ROLE OF PRAMĀṆAS IN ŚAṆKARA AND CATEGORIES IN KANT:

Pramāṇas and categories are the appropriate means of knowledge. Pramāṇas in Śaṅkara and categories in Kant are required to justify what is in appearance and what is in reality. Without the function of these

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4 Ibid., p. 92.
epistemological elements, we have merely appearance of the object. But, through the function of pramāṇas or the applicability of categories, we can transform appearances into reality. In Śaṅkara’s philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, when appearances grasp the form of mental mode of internal organ and pramāṇas are applied to it, they become reality as the object of phenomenal world. In this sense, pramāṇas are taken as reality. For Kant, the manifold of sensible intuitions which are not determined by the categories of understanding are the appearances. But, when appearances are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, become reality as phenomenon.

Śaṅkara, in his pramāṇa vicāra, and Kant, in his transcendental deduction of categories, raise the same question: How do we know that something exists or something does not exist in the phenomenal world? Both have same answer: We know it only through the pramāṇas (in Śaṅkara’s terminology) or categories (in Kantian terminology).

Śaṅkara establishes Paramārtha or thing-in-itself (in Kant’s terminology) as the ground of appearances or vyāvahāra. Paramārtha is the sphere of Ultimate Reality and the Absolute point of view, phenomenal world is appearance. But the empirical point of view, the world is real and we correspond the objects in our day-to-day life. All our empirical or vyāvahārika knowledge is possible only through the pramāṇas. But the realization of Paramārtha is not possible through it. Śaṅkara says that existence and non-existence of a object can be established only by the means of the pramāṇas. If something exists here and something does not exist, we know it only through the pramāṇas. Śaṅkara, in his pramāṇa vicāra, does not talk about the illusoriness of the world. In the Sūtras, Śaṅkara asks how do we know about the existence and non-existence of the object. If we prove the existence of the objects in the phenomenal world by all the pramāṇas, we cannot say that it does not exist. All the pramāṇas, except Śruti, is strictly limited to vyāvahārika
level. Śruti is the pramāṇa which is applicable to the sphere of Paramārtha. “The Śārīrakabhāṣya says that 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 pramāṇas cannot explain it.”⁵ After realization of Brahman, Śruti, like other pramāṇas, becomes illusory. “Śruti is only informative. It simply reminds us of ever-present fact, it does not create it.”⁶ Thus, the realization of Paramārtha is out of the coverage area for pramāṇas. They are limited to the sphere of phenomenal only. All our empirical or vyāvahārika knowledge are possible through the pramāṇas. No empirical knowledge is possible without the pramāṇas.

The aforesaid role of pramāṇas in Śaṅkara is very close to the role of categories in Kant. In our view, Śaṅkara’s vyāvahārika level, i.e. phenomenal world, is known as categorized knowledge in Kantian terminology. According to Kant, 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 things-in-themselves because the latter can never be given in sensible intuition. He states that things-in-themselves are the ground and cause of the appearances. Therefore they exist and act on our senses through which manifold of sensible intuitions is produced. But no category can be applied to things-in-themselves. Kant says, “They cannot, therefore, be viewed as applicable to things-in-themselves, 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...”⁷ However Kant’s categories cannot be applied to things-in-themselves but one of the pramāṇas, i.e. Śruti in Śaṅkara, is

⁶ Rao, Dr. V. N. Sheshagiri, Vācaspati’s Contribution to Advaita (Mysore, Samvit Publishers, 1984) p.18.
⁷ Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by N. K. Smith, etc., p. 54.
applied to Paramārtha. But both are accepted that the pramāṇas or categories do not exist in the realm of noumenon. We can never realize the noumenon or things-in-themselves through the pramāṇas or categories. Śaṅkara maintains that Paramārtha is not realized through Śruti or other pramāṇas but it is the Anubhava (pure intuition) through which we realize the Absolute Reality. So, Highest Reality, which is the sphere of Paramārtha, is known for all. In Kant's philosophy, the categories of understanding can never be applied to things-in-themselves because it can never be given in our sensible intuition. Therefore, it is unknown and unknowable for us.

So by the above mentioned comparison, we would like to conclude that Śaṅkara and Kant both accept that pramāṇas or categories do not exist in the sphere of Paramārtha or noumenon. They are limited to the sphere of vyāvahāra or phenomenon and no phenomenal knowledge is possible without the categories or pramāṇas. Therefore, Śaṅkara, on the one hand, take pramāṇas as reality form the empirical point of view, on the other hand, he holds that pramāṇas are illusory from the Absolute point of view. The basic difference between Śaṅkara and Kant regarding pramāṇas and categories is that Śaṅkara accept that all pramāṇas or means of knowledge are ultimately illusory because Brahman is the Ultimate Reality, all else other than Brahman, including pramāṇas, are not absolutely real. But in Kantian philosophy, categories are real.

Second similarity regarding Kant's categories and Śaṅkara's pramāṇas is that both accept the view that the means of knowledge, i.e. categories and pramāṇas, are operated by consciousness. According to Śaṅkara, we know the things by consciousness through the means of pramāṇas. "... any claim regarding affirmation or negation made for anything in the world presupposes evidence provided by consciousness by means of pramāṇas. Not only that even the ultimate presupposition of all pramāṇas- perception, inference, verbal testimony etc.- is provided by consciousness but also given
consciousness, all pramāṇas operate, in absence of consciousness no pramāṇas operate." So all the pramāṇas are operated by consciousness. In the absence of consciousness, no pramāṇa can operate. We know the objects through the pramāṇas, but we can never know consciousness as an object. Pramāṇas are not applicable to consciousness. In Śaṅkara’s philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, consciousness is self-luminous and self-proved (Svayam-siddha). Similarly, in Kant’s philosophy, the unity of 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, the unity of apperception constitutes the ultimate subject of knowledge. He says, “The principles of apperception is the highest principle in the whole sphere of human cognition.” The unity of 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 judgment “I think”, according to Kant, contains no knowledge of the “I” because it can never be given in a sensible-intuitions. Kant, like Śaṅkara, agrees that the categories are not applied to the unity of apperception and if we do so, there arise paralogism which are “formally invalid conclusion.” Through the paralogism Kant attempts to prove that the unity of apperception is unknown and unknowable. Here, I shall explain the function of knowledge in Śaṅkara and compare it with Kant which will be helpful to clarify the role of pramāṇas in Śaṅkara and role of categories in Kant.

According to Śaṅkara, the function of knowledge reveals the real nature of a thing. Śaṅkara says, “option (vikalpa) depends on human notions, whereas the valid knowledge of the true nature of a thing (Tattvajñāna) is not dependent on human notions... It is dependent on the thing itself... it

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10 Ibid., p.328.
corresponds to the thing itself. Thus the validity of the knowledge of an existing thing is determined by the thing in itself.\textsuperscript{11} So, knowledge, in Śaṅkara, is objective (\textit{vastutantram}) and in his view, it is independent of place, time and circumstances. In Śaṅkara’s words, “(valid) knowledge... is entirely determined by things, and neither by injunctions nor by man.”\textsuperscript{12} So, knowledge is “dependent on the thing itself (\textit{vastutantram})”\textsuperscript{13} but not “...dependent of place, time and circumstances.”\textsuperscript{14} To come on the judgement that ‘fire is hot’ is not based on any particular place and time. This is the characteristic of all knowledge that it is \textit{apriori} or \textit{aposteriori}, perceptual or intuitional. The knowledge of the statement that ‘fire is hot’ is necessary and universal and independent of place, time and causation- as the self-knowledge or the knowledge of the God, since both of them are \textit{vastutantram}. Place, time and causation do not determine the constitution of knowledge as such but they are simply antecedents of the knowledge. This is also a distinguishing feature which separates knowledge from action. It is action, says Śaṅkara, “which, being bound up with persons (i.e. subjective), may depend on place, time, circumstances...”\textsuperscript{15} An action is wholly ‘\textit{puruṣatantram}’ – relative to man but knowledge is ‘\textit{vastutantram}’ – relative to thing itself. According to Śaṅkara, “Knowledge is not a mental action. Knowledge although mental widely differs from meditation (\textit{dhyāna}) and reflection (\textit{cintanam}) because these processes are actions (\textit{kriyā}).”\textsuperscript{16} Upāsanā, with all its varieties, is a kind of action because finally it is ‘\textit{puruṣatantram}’.

\textsuperscript{11} “\textit{Vikalpanāstu puruṣabuddhyapekṣāḥ. Na Vastuyāthātmya vijnānarth puruṣabuddhyapekṣāḥ... Tatra puruṣoanyo vetti mithyājñānarth. Sthānureveti tatvajñānarth, vastutantratvāt” in Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śri Śaṅkarācārya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., 1.1.2, pp. 16-17.

\textsuperscript{12} “Jñānarth... kevalarth vastutantrameva tat, na codantitantram, nāpi puruṣatantram.” Ibid., 1.1.4, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 1.1.2, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{14} “Na deśakālanimittādyapekṣātvam” in The \textit{Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya}, trans. by Swami Madhavananda (Calcutta, Advaita Ashrama, 1984) 4.5.15, p.549.

\textsuperscript{15} “Kriyāyāstū puruṣatantratvāt syād...” Ibid., 4.5.15, p.549.

\textsuperscript{16} For detail, please see, “Nanu jnanam nam manasi kriya... kriya hi nam sa yatra vastusvarupaniarepekṣaṇa codyate, purusacittaryaparadhina ca... dhyānam, cintam yadypi manasam, tathapi purused kartumakartumanyata va kartum sakṣayam, puruṣatantratvot...” in Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śri Śaṅkarācārya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., 1.1.4, p. 34.
“Knowledge simply reveals reality but does not create it. It is informative and not creative.”\(^{17}\)

However, Śaṅkara accepts the fact that all our knowledge is independent of place, time and causations and also that all knowledge is \textit{vastutantram}. He is also aware about the celebrated differentiation of knowledge of universal and particular. The particular knowledge is the knowledge of individual objects and different from this is the universal knowledge which is concerned primarily with the Absolute and Infinite. For Śaṅkara, it is a distinction between ‘\textit{viṣeṣa vijñāna}’ and ‘\textit{nirviṣeṣa vijñāna}’, between ‘\textit{upādhi-viṣṭa vijñāna}’ and ‘\textit{sarvopādhi-vivarjita jñāna}’. Śaṅkara says, “... one as possessed of the limiting adjunct constituted by the diversities of the universe which is a modification of name and form (\textit{upādhi-viṣṭa}) and the other devoid of all conditioning factor (\textit{sarvopādhi-vivarjita}) and opposed to the earlier.”\(^{18}\) In different way, we can say that the particular knowledge is the knowledge of the reality as determined by name and form (\textit{nāma-rūpa}) and universal knowledge is the knowledge of the reality as such. Such a knowledge is not limited and determined by any adjuncts. “It is only \textit{Upaniṣadic} knowledge which, according to Śaṅkara, deserves the honourable title of universal knowledge and all other knowledge are only particular.”\(^{19}\) Such a universal knowledge is also called as “\textit{Samyak jñāna} (true illumination).”\(^{20}\)

Here we should compare Kant with Śaṅkara. Kant comes to the conclusion that the unconditioned is outside the periphery of knowledge by the analysis of knowledge with the help of \textit{apriori} conditions of experience. Śaṅkara, on the contrary, due to his epistemological character of knowledge,


\(^{18}\) “\textit{Naṁrūpaṇikārabhedopādhiśiṣṭaṁ, tadviparītaṁ ca sarvopādhiśīrṣṣe tataḥ}.” in \textit{Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya} of Śri Śaṅkarācārya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., 1.1.11., p. 62.

\(^{19}\) For detail, please see, \textit{Ibid.}, 1.1.12, pp. 61-64.

\(^{20}\) “\textit{Loke tadviśāyath jñānath samyagjñānāṁiti gubhyate...}” \textit{Ibid.}, 2.1.11, p. 322.
was led to enquire into the nature of pramāṇas as the result of his valuable
discovery, that all knowledge is vastutantram, independent of place, time and
circumstances and it is different from action, i.e., purusātantram. Śāṅkara holds
the view that if the proper pramāṇa is adopted, we know not only the
phenomenal reality but definitely comprehend the realm of noumenal reality
also. The reason for not comprehending the things-in-themselves and
apprehending only the things as they appear to us, according to Śāṅkara, is
due to the fact that we fail to realize the inner significance of things as
expressions of Brahman itself. If one is not able to know the Ultimate Reality
then, it is not due to the inner nature of knowledge, rather it is due to
inappropriate use of pramāṇa or means of knowledge. The fault is not with the
inherent nature of knowledge itself. When Kant proposes 'faith' as an
alternative to knowledge, it is simply substitution of one pramāṇa by another
pramāṇa. It is not to change the nature of knowledge itself. In fact, Kant could
not realize the essential oneness of all knowledge whatsoever. The dualism of
knowledge and faith shows a division in the field of knowledge itself. If Kant
had realized this insight, he simply could not have propounded the
unknowability or agnosticism concerning God, freedom and immortality as
the culmination of his rational enquiry. For Śāṅkara, “there is unity of
knowledge but diversity of pramāṇas depends on the plurality of objects.”

4.3. REALITY AS PARAMĀRTHA AND VYĀVHĀRA VIS-À-VIS
NOUMENON AND PHENOMENON:

Śāṅkara takes the realms of Paramārtha and vyāvahāra as reality of
higher and lower level. It is Ultimate Reality in the case of former and
empirical reality in the case of latter. Śāṅkara 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 higher
reality and lower reality, just like that there is no separation between
Paramārthika sat and vyāvahārika sat. Contrary to Śāṅkara, Kant, neither from

21 Singh, Ram Lal, An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Śāṅkara, etc., p. 74.
the epistemological nor ontological point of view, does not differentiate reality between higher and lower level or Ultimate Reality and empirical reality. Even he does not apply the term 'reality' for the realm of noumenon. In his view, appearance and reality could be found in the phenomenon and they could be object of knowledge. But noumenon and thing-in-itself transcends the categories of reality. According to him, reality is a concept under the category of Quality which constitutes an affirmative judgement. "All men are mortal" is an affirmative judgement. In an affirmative judgement a concept of reality is involved. Kant deduces the concept of reality from the judgement in which the concept of subject has a positive predicate. With this basic conception, I shall compare reality as Paramārtha and vyāvahāra in Śaṅkara and noumenon and phenomenon in Kant.

"Śaṅkara makes the great distinction between Paramārthika and vyāvahārika views of reality as Kant makes the distinction of noumenon and phenomenal."²² As we know, Kant's noumenon is completely free from the applicability of the categories of understanding and phenomenon is the sphere where these categories are applied. Śaṅkara, like Kant, also accepts that the vyāvahārika is the sphere where pramāṇas are applied. Both hold the view that there is no place for categories in the realm of noumenon or Paramārtha. In Kant's philosophy, no category can be applied to noumenon. But Śaṅkara establishes that Śruti is the only pramāṇa through which we can go towards the realm of Paramārtha. But Śruti does not exist in Paramārthika level. Śruti, like other pramāṇas, is also illusory from the Absolute point of view. As the rope-snake, which is illusory, produces real fear. Here we see that the cause is unreal but the effect is real. In a like manner, Śruti though illusory in character, can certainly reveal the real. It is only informative which indicates the meaning of verbal testimony and reminds us of an ever-present fact, but does not create it. Thus, as Kant admits that the categories are

limited to the sphere of phenomenon, Śaṅkara accepts that pramāṇas are illusory in Paramārthika, the Absolute point of view and function of these pramāṇas are possible in the sphere of vyāvahāra only. Basically, the distinction between these spheres are based on the fundamental thesis of Kant and Śaṅkara. Kant's fundamental thesis is based on this view that the scientific knowledge is incumbent within the world of phenomenon and in the territory of the spirituality, it is absolutely impassive. So, for Kant, noumenon and phenomenon are two completely separate spheres with no mediating transitions. But Śaṅkara's fundamental thesis is different from Kant. His primary concern is to understand Ātman and its relation to Brahman. In other words, what are the conceptions which ultimately justify a view of the absorption of the individual into universal soul. This is the fundamental conception of Śaṅkara. So he goes from vyāvahārika level towards Paramārthika level and discovers Anubhava (pure intuition) through which we realize the Paramārtha sat or Absolute Reality. At the level of Anubhava, all duality is removed, it is the stage of Advaita. Vyāvahārika sat is removed in this level. But in Kantian philosophy, noumenon and phenomenon always exist as two separate spheres.

According to Śaṅkara, Paramārtha cannot be known as an object by the intellect and Kant holds the view that noumenon or thing-in-itself cannot be known through the categories of understanding. But at a one hand, Śaṅkara believes that Paramārtha is Absolute Reality and it is directly realized through pure intuition (Anubhava), on the other hand, noumenon or thing-in-itself is unknown and unknowable for Kant. Kant assumes the existence of thing-in-itself as the ground and cause of appearances. Śaṅkara, in his theory of vivartavāda, proves that Paramārtha is the ground and cause of appearance (sphere of vyāvahāra). He removes the appearance (vyāvahāra) by the direct realization of cause (Paramārtha). Appearance is negated only with reference to reality in Śaṅkara's Advaita. The phenomenal world is effect and Brahman, the Paramārtha, i.e. highest reality, is the cause. Effect alone can be negated,
for it is unreal. But the cause, the ground cannot be negated, for it is the ultimate ground on which all effects or phenomenon are superimposed.

As we know, Kant regards appearances as the representation of things-in-themselves. Śaṅkara states that the sphere of vyāvahāra is the sphere of appearance from the Absolute point of view and it is the manifestation of Absolute Reality. Let us compare this situation between Śaṅkara and Kant.

In Kant’s philosophy, appearances are 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 things-in-themselves. They are determined by human sensibility and comprises their attributes. In other words, things, which we know through the space and time, are appearance. The function of knowledge itself makes unknowable to things-in-themselves or noumenon. We can clarify this situation by an example: If we are to imagine that we are permanently putting on red coloured spectacle, therefore all things would appear red. Here, the appearance of things is pre-determined because of the colour of the spectacles. Hence, all the things, viewed through the spectacles, would present its appearances but not things-in-themselves. Since we know that we are putting on the red coloured spectacles, so it is already known to us that the things would appear red. Therefore, Kant says that the nature of knowable things is pre-determined by us. Because of that, we cannot know undetermined nature of the things because we determine it before knowing it. Appearances are the representation of unknown and unknowable things-in-themselves. In this regard, Kant says, “...appearances are only representation of things which are unknown as regards what they may be in-
themselves."\footnote{Kant, \textit{Immaunel, Critique of Pure Reason}, trans. by N.K.Smith, etc., p.173.} In Śaṅkara's philosophy, world is appearance but not because of space and time but \textit{māyā} or \textit{avidyā}. Māyā acts as a screen to hide Absolute Reality. It conceals (āvarana) Reality and projects (vikṣepa) the world of plurality on the \textit{Brahman}. Thus, the world is appearance but it is illusion also. Kant does not accept the illusory nature of the world. For him, noumenon and phenomenon are two different spheres and exist separately. Phenomenon is not removed into noumenon. The categories of understanding are incapable to penetrate into thing-into-itself. Our categories act as a barrier between human knowledge and reality as it is in-itself. In this way, there is always a dualism between phenomenon and thing-in-itself. But for Śaṅkara, world is appearance and illusion from the \textit{Paramārthika} or Absolute point of view. When we realize the \textit{Paramārtha} through the pure intuition (Anubhava), the phenomenal world becomes illusion. Here, \textit{vyāvahāra} is merged into \textit{Paramārtha}. It is the sphere of \textit{Advaita} where there is no duality, where all distinctions, all plurality, all determinations, all qualities, all characteristics, all categories and all concepts are transcended. All determination of language and intellect are merged into the sphere of \textit{Paramārtha}. But Kant do not talk about any type of non-duality, here the duality always exists as the spheres of noumenon and phenomenon. Kant separates the realms of spirituality (noumenon) from the sphere of phenomenal world. So, on the one hand, for Śaṅkara, there is no duality, no differences of appearance and reality at all ultimately. On the other hand, for Kant, the duality, the differences between appearance and thing-in-itself always exist.

For Kant, noumenon and thing-in-itself are unknown and unknowable. But there is a basic difference regarding unknowability of noumenon and thing-in-itself. Noumenon can be known only through the intellectual intuition. But we can never comprehend noumenon because intellectual intuition, through which noumenon can be known, is of a special kind which we can never possess. Therefore, noumenon is unknown and
unknowable. Thing-in-itself is the ground and cause of the appearances. But categories of understanding cannot be applied to it. So thing-in-itself is unknown and unknowable. However, we can think, it, but we can never know it. So, for Kant, we can never be in the situation that we know the things-in-themselves or noumenon, i.e. Absolute Reality for Śaṅkara, we can know only phenomenon. However, we are aware that there does exist a separate realm which we are only catching glimpses of. This view of Kant is sufficient for provoking to Śaṅkara and other Advaitins. Here, Śaṅkara stands against Kant because the Paramārtha is never unknown and unknowable for him. According to him, however Paramārtha cannot be known by finite intellect but we realize it directly through pure intuition (Anubhava). Śaṅkara retorts to those who accept that Absolute reality, i.e. noumenon in Kant’s terminology, is unknown and unknowable. Śaṅkara says that if we accept that reality exists but is 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.” 24 Absolute Reality, therefore, must exist and is knowable by direct experience for Śaṅkara.

When Śaṅkara discusses three different levels of reality, i.e., pratībhāsika, vyāvahārika and Paramārthika sat, it appears that he is Paramārthavādī or in Kantian terminology, he is noumenist. In other words, Śaṅkara is Brahmovādī. As I have explained, the sphere of pratībhāsa and vyāvahāra are real in its own spheres. But the sphere of pratībhāsa is sublated when the sphere of vyāvahāra is known. And the sphere of vyāvahāra is removed when the sphere of Paramārtha is realized. Actually, in the sphere of pratībhāsa and vyāvahāra, we superimpose one thing or “the attributes of one

thing on another." It is the nature of adhyāsa. Strictly speaking, in the sphere of prātibhāsa and vyāvahāra, we superimpose phenomenal thing on Brahman. The thing, which we superimpose, is viṣaya or adhyāsta (object) and on the ground, on which thing is superimposed, is āśraya or adhiśthān (locus or substratum). The superimposed object is real during the illusion and when its ground is known as reality of superimposed object, it transforms as appearance and illusion. Therefore, when we realize the sphere of Paramārtha as the ground of prātibhāsa and vyāvahāra, the latter ground transforms as appearance and illusion and Paramārtha remains us as the Absolute reality. Thus, prātibhāsa and vyāvahāra are real only in its own spheres but Paramārtha is Ultimate Reality and when we realize it, prātibhāsa and vyāvahāra sublate. Therefore, in our view, Śaṅkara is not vyāvahāravādi or phenomenist but noumenist or Paramārtha. When we enquire Kant's ontology as the distinction of noumenon, thing-in-itself and phenomenon, we find that Kant is not only the noumenist but phenomenist also. Noumenon and phenomenon are the two separate spheres and exist independently. There is no mediating incumbent between them. Scientific knowledge is limited to the sphere of phenomenon only and in the territory of noumenon, it cannot intrude. The territory of noumenon is called as the realm of spirituality. However, Kant proposes intellectual intuition to realize the noumenon, but intellectual intuition is not possible for man. Therefore, we can never comprehend noumenon. There is no mediating element between noumenon and phenomenon. Therefore, noumenon and phenomenon remain to us as completely two separate spheres with no mediating element. Thus, they exist independently. In this sense, Kant is noumenist and phenomenist both. Basically, the issue to be noumenist or phenomenist of Śaṅkara and Kant is based on their primary concern which we stated above. Actually, Anubhava in

25Anyasya anya dharmāvabhāstā” in Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., Introduction, Section I, p. 2.
Śaṅkara and intellectual intuition in Kant participate a very effective role in their philosophy. Let us take up reality as *Anubhava* in Śaṅkara and noumenon as intellectual intuition in Kant.

**4.4. REALITY AS ANUBHAVA IN ŚAṄKARA AND NOUMENON AS INTELLECTUAL INTUITION IN KANT:**

Śaṅkara and Kant reject sensual conceptual process as an appropriate way of approaching noumenal reality. Śaṅkara realized the Absolute reality or the sphere of *Paramārtha* through the *Anubhava* (intuition) and Kant proposes intellectual intuition as the means of attaining noumenon. In their philosophy of appearance and reality, the notion of intuitive realization plays a vital role but its relationship to noumenal reality perceived differently.

Within Kant’s framework of knowledge, sensibility and understanding are the two factors that constitute the knowledge. Through intuition, objects are given and through concepts, they are thought. Sensibility furnishes the manifold materials which are absolutely chaotic and unintelligible, while understanding gives them unifying form and renders them intelligible. Therefore, knowledge shows a dualism of form and matter. Understanding receives sensible intuitions through the proper channel of space and time. In other words, sensibility is posited and ordered in the *apriori* form of space and time. Space and time, for Kant, are always mind-dependent and subjective. Therefore, we know only the phenomenon but things-in-themselves and noumenon which are independent of space and time and where categories are not applicable, we cannot know. Thus, they remain unknown and unknowable. Noumenon and thing-in-itself can be thought only "...under the title of an unknown something.”

Our knowledge of the phenomenon is possible through the sensibility and categories. Kant proposes intellectual intuition to comprehend the realm of noumenon. Intellectual

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intuition is a special mode of non-sensible intuition and noumenon is its object. Kant says that noumenon is "... an object of a non-sensible intuition, we thereby presuppose a special mode of intuition namely, the intellectual..." But man can never possess this intellectual intuition, even he cannot grasp its possibility. Therefore, man can never comprehend noumenon because intellectual intuition, which comprehends noumenon, is of a special kind which he can never possess. If Kant had grasped intellectual intuition, he would have forwarded his approach in the realm of the noumenon, i.e., spirituality. In Śaṅkara's terminology, it is Paramārtha.

Kant admits the possibility of intellectual intuition only in God. For him, Divine cognition alone is spontaneous. Kant says, "Divine perception is original intuitus originarius as distinguished from derivative intuition or intuitus derivatives." On the basis of this explanation, we find that "such understanding is not sensuous, but intellectual; it is not derivative but original; the object itself is created in the act of intuition." The objects 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 but on the other hand, God's perception is creative.

By intellectual intuition the mode of knowledge is understood that possesses no reciprocity, but is entirely spontaneous. In intellectual intuition "nothing is received and the whole process is the act of the spirit. There mind is not confronted with another world from which it is to receive its contents. In intellectual intuition, mind is autonomous."

However, Man cannot comprehend Kant's noumenal entities like God, immortality and freedom through intellectual intuition. But from my point of

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27 Ibid., p. 268.  
28 For detail, please see, Ibid., p. 90.  
30 Singh, Ram Lal, An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Sāṅkara, etc., p. 126.
view, Kant, under the influence of Christianity, postulates these entities. Intellectual intuition failed to possess noumenon. Here, Śaṅkara’s philosophy of Advaita Vedānta may suggest some positive corrective measures to Kantian philosophy. According to Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara, “Ultimate truth can be known and seen. It uses the testimony of the scripture not in the interests of dogmatic form of religion, as theology does, but in the interest of a real metaphysical knowledge which tolerates no dogma.”31 Basically, Kant puts lot of emphasis upon the aprioriness of knowledge which is characterized by necessity and universality. However, contrary to this, he paid almost no attention to the realization of Self as the sole and Ultimate Reality in the intuitive awareness of any form of higher experience. To claim that noumenal entities are postulation of ethics and morality and are realized in practical reason, is simply the denial of their philosophical awareness. Now, I would like to expound the nature and status of Anubhava (pure intuition) in Śaṅkara’s philosophy of Advaita Vedānta.

According to Śaṅkara, vastutantram is the criterion of all knowledge but the means of knowledge are varied. Śaṅkara says, “The means of knowledge are powerful in their respective spheres”32 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.”33 The metaphysics can attain its content only on the right use of the means of knowledge. Śaṅkara draws clear distinction between reason and intuition, the two different faculties having different scopes and functions- the one dealing with the relative and conditioned knowledge, while the other with the Absolute and unconditioned one. Reason, therefore, is not competent to pronounce any judgement upon the affirmations of intuition (Anubhava). Essentially, Śaṅkara’s epistemology

32 “Svaviṣayāsūryaiti hi pramāṇāni ...” in The Bṛhadārāṇyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, trans. by Śwāmi Madhavananda, etc., 2.1.20, p.217.
33 “Na ca pramāṇarth pramāṇāntaratva virūḍhyate, pramāṇāntarā viśayameva hi pramāṇāntaratvā jñāpayati.” Ibid., 2.1.20, pp.209.
brings out an important truth that Absolute Reality can be realized through the pure intuition (Anubhava) but, not understood in the ordinary ratiocinative way.

Śaṅkara separates sensuous perception (pratyakṣa) from the knowledge of the Absolute Reality - Brahman or Ātman. Sensuous perception, for Śaṅkara, is useless and incompetent to get the knowledge of Absolute Reality which is beyond spatio-temporal determinations. Śaṅkara holds that Brahman has the nature of permanent existent reality that cannot be the object of perception and other means of knowledge. Śaṅkara says, "... Nor is Brahman an object of perception, even though it stands as an established positive entity..." Sense-organs, the basis of all perception (empirical), cannot attain the Reality because senses, by their very nature, reveal the external things and not Brahman or Ultimate Reality. Śaṅkara says that Brahman is "...outside the range of sense-perception. The sense naturally comprehends objects, and not Brahman" It is Anubhava which alone can enable us to possess direct access to Brahman or the Absolute Reality. He says, "...Personal experience...are the valid means as far as possible; for the knowledge of Brahman culminates in experience and it relates to an existing entity." 

Anubhava, according to Śaṅkara, is a complete and adequate apprehension of Reality. The man who knows Reality by such an intuition (Anubhava) becomes Reality itself(Brahma veda Brahmaiva Bhavati). Brahman or Absolute reality is nothing but this 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 the Real as Real. Man can possess such an experience (Anubhava) only through the unification

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34 "Na ca pariniṣṭhitā vastusvarūpateṣvam pratyakṣādi viṣayatvātī brahmanāḥ" in Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śri Śaṅkaraśārya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., 1.1.4, p.22.
35 "Na indriyāviṣayatvena sambhāvahṛdayavāt. Sambhāvato viṣayaviṣayāindriyāni na brahmaviṣayāni." Ibid., 1.1.2, p. 17.
36 "Anubhavavasānāvato bhūtavastu viṣayatoacca bramajñānasya." Ibid., 1.1.2, p. 16.
of Self with real. This knowledge of the Real alone constitutes the Real knowledge. *Anubhava*, on the one hand, represents this knowledge and also the means to it, on the other hand, Śaṅkara declares that “the goal of all knowledge is *Anubhava* or direct apprehension.”

Śaṅkara opines that *Anubhava* (intuition) grasps only those entity which has no name, no form, where speech and language are ceased, and that is more than an idea or sensuous, i.e., *Brahman*. This is super-sensible and spiritual entity, which is one, is comprehended by *Anubhava* (intuition). In the context of sense-perception as different from *Anubhava*, the world is known through the sense perception. The world is something which has its beginning only in speech. It is in giving names that there is a world. Śaṅkara says that world is “based upon speech, i.e., depending on speech ... That which is depending on speech is nothing but name.”

Now, let us compare the status of reality as *Anubhava* in Śaṅkara and noumenon as intellectual intuition in Kant (*Anubhava*). The *Anubhava* of Śaṅkara is the means of knowledge of *Brahman*. Śaṅkara’s notion of *Anubhava* is very similar to Kant’s notion of intellectual intuition. This intuition, for Kant, brings the direct knowledge of the noumenal Reality. However, Kant claims that such an intuition is not possible for man. It is “the prerogative of the original Being, and can never belong to a being which is dependent in its existence as well as in its perception, and in fact is conscious of its own existence only in relation to given objects.” This kind of intuition is ‘original’ (*intuitus originarius*). The human beings grasp only empirical intuition which cannot intrude behind the appearances – the thing-in-itself. It knows only the empirical objects of experience. The perception of man, which

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37 See, “…anubhava avasānatvād bhūtavastu viṣayatvāca brahmaṇānāsya.” Ibid., 1.1.2, p. 16 & 1.1.4, p. 25.


39 Watson, John, *The Philosophy of Kant Explained* (Glasgow, 1908) p. 38.
is under forms of sensibility, is simply sensuous because it is derivative (intuitus derivatives and not original (intuitus originarius) while this is not the case with intellectual perception. Our sensuous perception is derivative because it depends on the existence of the object. Therefore, it is possible only when our perceptive consciousness is affected by the presence of the object outside us. According to Kant, intellectual intuition belongs only to the noumenal entities. Actually, Kant and Śaṅkara have no dispute regarding the function of intellectual intuition. Both of these have similar views that knowledge of the Ultimate Reality is not at all possible through sensuous intuition. Kant absolutely denies the possibility of the knowledge of thing-in-itself as an object. In the same way for Śaṅkara also, Brahman is “outside the range of sense-perception. The senses naturally comprehend objects, and not Brahman.”

Nevertheless, the resemblance regarding the issue of intellectual intuition comes to an end here itself. While, according to Kant, the intellectual intuition can never belong to man and the Anubhava in Śaṅkara, which is almost a exchangeable and interchangeable term for Kantian intellectual intuition, is pivotal and foundational to his (Śaṅkara) metaphysics and epistemology. In Śaṅkara’s view, the Vedic Rsis realize the Ultimate Reality in the state of Samyak-jñāna or personal experience. They are “the valid means as for as possible; for the knowledge of Brahman culminates in experience.”

Since Kant distinguishes his own idealism from the other forms of idealism on behalf of intellectual intuition which, for him, is impossible for human being. However, Śaṅkara claims that intuition (Anubhava) of man is not merely sensuous but also original and intellectual in Kant’s terminology. Man is capable of having the knowledge of his own Self which is Sat, Cit and Ānanda. The Self is identically to Brahman and Brahman is the Self of everyone.

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40"...indriyāviśayatvena sambandhāagrahṇāt. Svabhāvato viśayaviśayāndriyātī na brahmaviśayātī" in Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śri Śaṅkaraścārya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., 1.1.2, pp. 16-17.

41 "...srutāyadayaanubhāvidayaśca yathāsambhavamiha pramāṇam, anubhavavasanatvāt bhutavastu viśayatvacca brahmajnanasya." Ibid., 1.1.2, p. 16.
Śaṅkara holds the view that perception is the fundamental means of knowledge. Though the perception may be either sensuous or non-sensuous or spiritual. While the object of phenomenal world are known by the sensuous perception, contrary to it, the demand of the knowledge of spirituality, i.e. Paramārtha, require spiritual perception. Śaṅkara calls this spiritual perception as Anubhava. Kant holds the view that the knowledge of God himself demands an intellectual intuition. Further, it leads to the view that intellectual intuition is the true type of all knowledge in reference to Śaṅkara. We can say that if God can access to the thing-in-itself through the intellectual intuition then, human beings must have an access to it as God has it. Even Śaṅkara himself maintains the view that man knows the Brahman as He is, because Śaṅkara maintains the relation of identity between Brahman and Ātman. Man, while trying to know Brahman, actually knows his own Self, his own Ātman. It is essence of all the Upaniṣads that we are nothing but Ātman, the Brahman that is always “undiminishing, eternal- that is the undecaying...unchanging, permanent, beginningless (anādi), cause...”

Consequently, on this ground we can explain the claims of man for intellectual intuition.

Under the influence of theistic thought of his age, Kant could not possibly realize the internal relation between human beings and God. “He could not offer a better theory of God than that of a ‘pay master’ whose sole responsibility lies in the distribution of ‘doles of happiness’ in exact proportion to virtue, among those who had worked for it.”

For Kant, man and God belong to two absolutely different realms and what is the privilege

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for the God is unknown for the man. Consequently, Kant maintained the view that God knows the thing-in-itself through an intellectual intuition and man can manage to have an access to it only through faith. But this dichotomy of intellectual intuition and faith does not have any place in Śaṅkara’s philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. According to Śaṅkara, there is only one way to realize Ultimate Reality, i.e., Brahmaṇ and we can realize it through direct experience of it – the Anubhava or “Ātmāpratyaya.”

Kant, as a matter of fact, has not denied the knowledge of God, freedom and immortality in order to make room for faith. Ultimately, intellectual intuition and faith are simply different expressions for one and the same thing, if the same noumenal Reality is known to God through intellectual intuition and revealed to man through faith. Samyak-jñāna is vastutantram. It is of one and the same form (eka rūpa) and Anubhava is the means to it. The Self, for Śaṅkara, is not “a subject in the sense in which it means an agent of the activity of knowledge as distinguished from the act of knowing and the object of knowledge.”

Kant, on the one hand, holds the view that noumenal entity can be known through intellectual intuition but man can never possess intellectual intuition and, on the other hand, he makes room for faith through which we can believe God, freedom and immortality which is the sphere of noumenon. Therefore, it is faith, in my view, that Kant postulates his noumenal entities. “The whole of metaphysics, though it is a cognitive activity and expresses itself in a rational form, really lives by an act of faith or an ontological commitment. It is not itself knowledge but only the promise of knowledge.

It is merely a formulation and translation in intellectual terms of a mode of direct realization. Since the roots of our being are in the

44 “Ātmāśabdopratyayayoḥ” in The Brhadārātīyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, trans. by Swāmī Mādhvānanda, etc., 1.4.7, p.95.
transcendent, i.e. the metaphysical reality, it is natural that the creation of our mind, including the products of reason, should carry within them a nisus towards the supra-rational and transcendent. If it did not philosophy would become the supreme barrier between man and God.”46

In the process of knowing the noumenal Reality, Kant thoroughly misleads us when he claims that God and man come from two different and separate realms. Therefore, he consequently creates the dichotomy between intellectual intuition and faith. While Śaṅkara’s view of Ātmānubhava does not hold this mistake. The final criterion of Ultimate Reality is one’s own intuitive experience. This is the Advaitic view of knowledge as “direct realization (Aprokṣānubhava).”47

As we have discussed earlier that there are two dimensions of knowability: one Kantian, limiting knowledge to objects given in experience, and the other Advaitic, extending the sphere of knowability beyond objects of sense-perception. We come to know by Śaṅkara’s criticism of the philosophy of Nyāya and Mīmāṁsā that he is conscious about the unknowability of the Unconditioned as an object as in Kant. While Kant’s view is not so broad as Śaṅkara when he demonstrates the unknowability of the Unconditioned. But this view in Advaita is double-edged. It shows the limitation of thought but justifies the scope of Reason (pure reason) by depicting that it is also knowledge, knowledge-in-itself. This knowledge neither contemplates an object, nor it loses its intelligibility. Those, who deny outright the possibility of such intuitive knowledge (Anubhava), they can never realize Brahmān, i.e., the sphere of noumenon in Kant’s terminology. The account of pure experience, as we find in Śaṅkara, is essentially an attempt to go beyond the unknowability of Absolute Reality. Śaṅkara’s analysis of pure experience is

46 Chubb, J.N., The Concept of Philosophy, read and discussed in the All-India Philosophy Seminar organized by Centre for Advanced Studies in Philosophy, 1964 (Unpublished).
47 Talks on Śaṅkara’s Vivekachoodamani, trans. by Śwami Chinmayananda (Bombay, Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1970) Stanza 62, p.82.
wider and more comprehensive than Kant. What Kant actually provides us is not the knowledge of noumenal Reality in itself, but essentially a theory of scientific knowledge which is limited to the sphere of phenomenon.

Kant conceives an intellectual intuition which, for him, if we could possess, would have enabled us to enter into the noumenal world, i.e., Paramārtha in Śaṅkara's terminology. In other words, we would have known the things in its true nature. But he denies its reality in man and accepts its possibility in God. Man has only sensuous intuition, he knows nothing supersensuous. Therefore, man can know the things as they appear to them but he can never know what they are in themselves. In different way, we can say that man can never comprehend noumenon because intellectual intuition, through which noumenon can be known, is not possible for man. Now, noumenon remains unknown and unknowable and Kant's philosophy ends in agnosticism. Here, intellectual intuition of Kant is different from the Anubhava of Śaṅkara. Through the Anubhava, we are not only in the position of realization of the Brahman, but we also become Brahman. Anubhava is the unique means for the realization of the Absolute. Philosophy from the standpoint of Advaita Vedānta has "its beginning and end in Revelation ... It beings with Śruti...and ends in Anubhūti ... thereby making the spiritual heritage of mankind a personal possession". That is why, on the one hand, intellectual intuition failed to comprehend the noumenal entities, on the other hand, Anubhava successfully grasps the Absolute Reality, i.e., Brahman or Ātman. Therefore, for Śaṅkara, Self is not beyond the Anubhava but, for Kant, it cannot be known through intellectual intuition and if we try to apply the categories to it, there arises paralogism. Now, it is relevant time to take up Reality as Self or Sūkṣin in Śaṅkara and Self as a paralogism in Kant.

4.5. REALITY AS SELF OR SĀKŚIN IN ŚAṅKARA AND SELF AS A PARALOGISM IN KANT:

The intellectual expedition in the realm of consciousness is extremely complex and multifaceted. In the extensive field of philosophy, we come across consciousness as an ontological being, an epistemological subject, a moral agent, an aesthetic being, a psychological being, a Yogic subject and so on. It has moved the philosophical insight so persistently that the combined study of East and West has not solved the problem of consciousness, once and for all. Socrates, who shifted philosophic problems from physics to ethics, expressed it in the form of a command ‘Know Thyself’ at Delphi, and the ancient Hindu saints, sages and seers expressed the problem in the form of a forceful interrogation ‘Koacham?’ Obviously, there is a philosophical unrest, anxiety and apprehension concerning consciousness.

As we have discussed, our phenomenal knowledge is possible through the pramāṇas or categories which are operated by consciousness. Without consciousness, no knowledge is possible. Consciousness, in its own nature, is witness self in Śaṅkara and Kant. Śaṅkara designates it as Sākśin and Kant takes it as transcendental unity of self-consciousness.

So far as the knowledge of Self is concerned, there is an astonishing similarity between Śaṅkara and Kant. Kant has criticized Aristotle’s formulation of categories like this: ‘he simply picked them up as they came in his way’. Kant goes to give a systematic formulation of the categories. The common structure of consciousness, Kant designates as “transcendental unity of self-consciousness”.49 It consists of ‘forms of intuition’ (space and time) and ‘forms of understanding’ (the categories), which are not static forms but forms of operation that exist only in the act of apprehending and

49 Kant, Immanuel, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by N.K. Smith, etc., p. 130.
comprehending sensibility. The 'forms of intuition' synthesize the manifold of sensibility into spatio-temporal order and by virtue of the categories, they are brought to universal and necessary relations of cause and effect, substance, reciprocity and so on—"receptivity is thus combined with spontaneity."\(^{50}\) This entire complex is unified in the transcendental apperception, which relates all experience to the "thinking ego."\(^{51}\) This is what Kant calls as beginningless, transcendental, original, synthetic unity of apperception. In the synthetic unity of apperception, according to Kant, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, not as I am in myself, but only that I am. The 'I think' must be, Kant insists, capable of accompanying all my representations. But the 'I think' always remains unknown and unknowable by means of the categories because it cannot as such be given in representation. If we try to apply the categories to the 'I think', such categories as 'substance', 'existence', 'person' etc., we come across a "series of paralogisms."\(^{52}\)

This view of the Self, developed by Kant, is very close to the Advaitic doctrine of Ātman developed by Śaṅkara. Kant has worked on the same position which had inspired Śaṅkara from the Upaniṣads. "How can you know that which is the knower of everything."\(^{53}\) 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. To these, he sometimes adds "space, time, circumstances and non-contradiction."\(^{54}\) In our opinion, It was for the first time in European philosophy that a view of the self approximating to the Advaitic doctrine of the self was so clearly formulated. It

\(^{50}\) Ibid., p. 130.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 143.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., p.327.
\(^{53}\) "Yenedam sarvatih vijānāti tath kenā vijāniyādvijānātāramare kena vijānīyāditi" in The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: with the Commentary of Saṅkarācārya, trans. by Swāmī Mādhavananda, etc., 2.4.12, p.262.
\(^{54}\) "Deśa-kāla-nimittā-sampattī abādhaścā" in Braham-Sūtra-Bhāsyā of Śri Saṅkarācārya, trans. by Swami Gambhirananda, etc., 3.2.3, p.590.
goes to the credit of Kant to have 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 cannot itself be known as an object of knowledge. Here the Kantian doctrine of Self looks like Upaniṣadic view expressed in the words ‘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 attempts 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. It should be kept in mind that here we are showing similarity between self of Śaṅkara and self of Kant which is Śaṅkara’s witnessing self. Therefore, this witnessing self is the logical necessity of the function of our knowledge. It is not the Brahman or Ātman which is Nirguṇa, contrary to Śāksin.

The basic purpose of Kant’s critical 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 penetrate in the realm of noumenon, i.e., spirituality. Scientific knowledge is possible by the application of the categories of understanding. And 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 destination, he goes from vyāvahārika level to Paramārthika level. When he finds 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 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 pramāṇas or categories which are operated by the consciousness. Without consciousness, no pramāṇa, no category 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 maintains that Sākṣin is present in all our experience and knowledge between the three stages of consciousness. Kant, like Śaṅkara, follows this view because Kant's transcendental consciousness, in its witnessing nature, provides the ultimate unity between sensibility and understanding. Kant 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 one knowledge.\(^{55}\) Consciousness, thus, is 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 witness consciousness, maintains our identity, knowledge and experience. All the objects are changeable but witness self is unchangeable and permanent because he maintains our knowledge and experience. We can find this view of Śaṅkara in Kant when he says, "There can be in us no mode of knowledge, no connection or unity of one 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."\(^{56}\) 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 depict that consciousness cannot be known as an object through the senses and mind. Śaṅkara states that Self can never become an object as It is beyond the reach of the senses. It is realized through the *Anubhava* (pure intuition). Therefore, *Sākṣin* or Self is not unknown for Śaṅkara. In Kant's view, the transcendental consciousness can never be given in sensibility. And, if the categories of understanding are applied to it, there arise paralogism, by which, Kant means, "formally invalid conclusions."\(^{57}\) The fallacy arises when certain conclusions are drawn from the judgements "I think" namely, (i) that the soul is a substance, (ii) that it is a simple, (iii) that it is a person, (iv) that it is in relation to possible objects in space. These are the

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\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 136.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., p.328.
four kinds of paralogisms through which Kant attempts to prove that the unity of apperception is unknown and unknowable.

When we analyse transcendental unity of self-consciousness in Kant and consciousness as Witnessing Self or Sākṣin in Śaṅkara, we find that Kantian transcendental consciousness is not the self-evident. But, for Śaṅkara, Sākṣin or Self is self-evident (Svataḥ siddha). 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. Ātman is the basis of all kinds of knowledge, presuppositions and proofs. Self is within; Self is without; Self is before; Self is behind; Self is on the right; Self is on the left; Self is above and Self is below. Infact, the self-luminous Cit of the Vedānta does not admit even of the transcendental proof. ‘How can that by which all the pramāṇas are established, be itself established by the pramāṇas?’ In Śaṅkara’s words, ‘... it being self established. For the self of anyone 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 are taken up for proving the existence of other things that remain unknown, belong to this very self.’

Thus, the transcendental method of Kant cannot establish the Self or Ātman of Advaita philosophy. “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 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.”

According to Śaṅkara’s philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, the Self reveals and manifests

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58 “... Svayath-siddhatvāt. Na hyātmātmānḥ pramāṇamaapekṣya siddhyati. Tasya hi pratyakṣādīni pramānānyā prasiddhaprameya siddhyaya upādīyante.” in Brhma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, trans. by Śrī Śāntideva, etc., 2.3.7, p. 455.

59 Das, S.K., A Study of the Vedānta, etc., pp. 94-95.
itself in dreamless sleep. The dreamless sleep "probably appeared too slippery a ground for Kant, and so he preferred to stick to his transcendental unity of Apperception – the ‘dark lantern’ that illumines the whole world except itself."\(^{60}\) This very self is the Absolute of Śaṅkara which no one can deny; it is the pre-established ground (Svayam- siddha) of all proof and disproof as well, though it cannot be known in the same way in which object is known. “The Absolute is like the light which manifests all objects, and which, consequently, does not require another light for its own revelation.”\(^{61}\)

To sum up, Śaṅkara and Kant consider the same question in their epistemology: how our knowledge of the phenomena is possible or, how appearances transform into reality. According to Śaṅkara, if we have bare sensations of the object, it is indeterminate perception (nirvikalpa pratyakṣa). It is only the appearance of an object. In the state of indeterminate perception (nirvikalpa pratyakṣa), the organ of perception is involved but the internal organ (antahkarana) are absent. So we cannot comprehend the nature and status of the object which is in front of us and we have merely the appearance of the object or the sensation of the object. Here, the form of mental mode (vṛtti) of internal organ (antahkarana) does not apply on these sensations. For Kant, it is the blindness of sensible intuition or meaningless object. In Kant’s epistemological situation, the manifold of sensible intuitions, in so far as they are not determined by the categories of understanding, are the appearance. But in savikalpa pratyakṣa, sensation becomes the form of mental mode (vṛtti) of internal organ (antahkarana). Here, appearance of the object transform into real object. In this state, sensible appearances become reality, i.e., objects exist in phenomenal world. In Kant’s philosophy, it is the object on which we apply the categories of understanding. Advaita recognizes the fundamental fact about knowledge which is said to be the distinct contribution to Kant to Western philosophy that knowledge involves both sensation and conception.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 95.
\(^{61}\) Mukerji, A.C., The Nature of Self, etc., p. 309.
But hundreds of years ago from Kant, Indian philosophers propounded that our perceptual knowledge is constructed by the senses and mind. Further, pramāṇas in Śaṅkara and categories in Kant play very important role to transform appearances into reality. Pramāṇas and categories are the appropriate means of knowledge. Pramāṇas in Śaṅkara and categories in Kant are required to justify what is in appearance and what is in reality. Without the function of these epistemological elements, we have merely appearance of the object. But, through the function of pramāṇas or the applicability of categories, we can transform appearances into reality. In Śaṅkara's philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, when appearances grasp the form of mental mode of internal organ and pramāṇas are applied to it, they transform into reality as the object of phenomenal world. In this sense, pramāṇas are taken as reality. For Kant, the manifold of sensible intuitions which are not determined by the categories of understanding are the appearances. But, when appearances are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, become reality as phenomenon. Śaṅkara takes the realms of Paramārtha and vyāvahāra as reality of higher and lower level. It is Ultimate Reality in the case of former and empirical reality in the case of latter. Śaṅkara 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 higher reality and lower reality, just like that there is no separation between Paramārthika sat and vyāvahārīka sat. Contrary to Śaṅkara, Kant, neither from the epistemological nor ontological point of view, does not differentiate reality between higher and lower level or Ultimate Reality and empirical reality. Even he does not apply the term 'reality' for the realm of noumenon. In his view, appearance and reality could be found in the phenomenon and they could be object of knowledge. But noumenon and thing-in-itself transcends the categories of reality. According to him, reality is a concept under the category of Quality which constitutes an affirmative judgement. "All men are mortal" is an affirmative judgement. In an affirmative judgement a concept of reality is involved. Kant deduces the
concept of reality from the judgement in which the concept of subject has a
positive predicate. Śaṅkara is Paramārthavādi or in Kantian terminology he is
"noumenist." But Kant is noumenist and phenomenist both. Śaṅkara makes the
distinction between Paramārthika and vyāvahārika sat as Kant makes the
distinction between noumenon and phenomenon. Śaṅkara accepts that
vyāvahāra is the sphere where pramāṇas are applied. Śruti is only informative
and justify the meaning of Mahāvākyas. We cannot realize the Absolute reality
through the Śruti but through the Anubhava (pure intuition). Pramāṇas are
illusory in Paramārthika point of view and their functions are possible only in
the sphere of vyākhyāya. However, Śruti is applicable to Paramārthika level. But
Kant's noumenon, unlike Śaṅkara's Paramārtha, is completely free from the
applicability of the categories of understanding and phenomenon is the
sphere where these categories are applied. The categories are not applicable
to noumenon and limited to phenomenon only. For Kant, noumenon and
thing-in-themselves are unknown and unknowable. Noumenon can be
known only through the intellectual intuition. But intellectual intuition is not
that which we possess. So we cannot comprehend noumenon because intellectual
intuition, through which we can comprehend noumenon, is not possible for
man. Therefore, noumenon is unknown and unknowable for us. Kant limits
the sphere of scientific knowledge to phenomenon in order to leave room for
faith. The sphere of faith is known as noumenon. Thing-in-itself is the ground
and cause of appearances but the categories of understanding cannot be
applied to it. Therefore, things-in-themselves are unknown and unknowable
for us. However, we can think it but we cannot know it. However, Kant and
Śaṅkara both hold the view that thing-in-itself or Paramārtha is ground and
cause of appearance and it cannot be known as an object by the intellect. But
for Śaṅkara, Paramārtha or Absolute Reality is not unknown and unknowable.
We can realize it directly through the pure intuition (Anubhava). Thus, he
removes the appearances through pure intuition. In Kantian philosophy,
space and time are necessary and apriori forms of sensible intuition in which
the manifold of sensible-intuition can be posited and ordered. When objects
are given in our cognition, we bring the objects in spatio-temporal order and the thing-in-itself which is independent of space and time, we do not grasp it. So, we know only phenomenon but cannot know things-in-themselves. In Śaṅkara’s philosophy, we find that world is appearance but not because of space and time but because of māyā and avidyā. Here the world is not only appearance but illusion also. Kant does not accept the illusory nature of the world. For him, noumenon and phenomenon are two different spheres and exist separately. Phenomenon is not merged into noumenon. Here the duality, between phenomenon and noumenon or appearance and thing-in-itself, exists permanently. But in Śaṅkara’s philosophy of Advaita Vedānta, world is appearance and illusion from Paramārthika point of view. When we realize the Paramārtha or the Absolute reality, the phenomenal world becomes illusion. In this stage, vyāvahāra is merged into Paramārtha. It is the sphere of Advaita where there is no duality; where all distinction, all categories, all plurality etc. transcended. Kant do not talk about non-duality. Here, the duality and distinction between phenomenon and noumenon always exist. Therefore, on the one hand, for Śaṅkara, there is no duality, no differences at all ultimately, on the other hand, for Kant, the duality between phenomenon and noumenon always exist. Basically, the distinction of appearance and reality are concerned with the fundamental thesis of Kant and Śaṅkara. Kant’s fundamental thesis concerns with scientific knowledge which is possible only in the sphere of phenomenon and in the realm of spirituality, it cannot penetrate. So, for Kant, phenomenon and noumenon are two completely separate spheres with no mediating transitions. Śaṅkara’s fundamental thesis is different from Kant. Śaṅkara’s primary concern is to understand Ātaman and its relation to Brahman. So he goes from vyāvahārika level towards Paramārthika level, from the level of appearance towards the level of Absolute Reality and discovers Anubhava (intuition) through which we realize the Ultimate Reality. On the level of the realization of Absolute, we find that world is appearance and illusion. Śaṅkara and Kant reject sensual conceptual process as an appropriate way of approaching noumenal reality. Śaṅkara
realized the Absolute reality or the sphere of Paramārtha through the
Anubhava (intuition) and Kant proposes intellectual intuition as the means of
attaining noumenon. In their philosophy of appearance and reality, the
notion of intuitive realization plays a vital role but its relationship to
noumenal reality perceived differently. On the one hand, intellectual intuition
failed to comprehend the noumenal entities, on the other hand, Sāksin or Self
is realized through the Anubhava (pure intuition). Therefore, it is not
unknown for Śaṅkara. It is self-evident (Svataḥ siddha). It is not established by
extraneous proofs. But, for Kant, the transcendental consciousness can never
be given in sensibility. And, if the categories of understanding are applied to
it, there arise paralogism, by which, Kant means formally invalid conclusions.
For Śaṅkara, Sāksin is the witness self and presents in all the levels of
experience. It is the logical presupposition of knowledge and experience. It
illuminates all the objects presented to it. It is the pure subject and
unknowable as an object. Here Kant would like to agree with Śaṅkara.
Because he accepts that the unity of 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 is given in perception.
It was for the first time in European philosophy that a view of self
approximating to the Advaitic doctrine of the self was so clearly formulated. It
goes to the credit of Kant. As we know, noumenon and phenomenon exist
independently as two spheres. Kant could not remove this duality. Actually,
Kant could not realize the real nature of Self or Ātman. But Śaṅkara realized
the real nature of Ātman and found that Ātman is not different from
Brahman which is Absolute Reality. Therefore, Śaṅkara gets his philosophical
destination as Advaita.