CHAPTER IV

THE STATUS OF APPEARANCE
Chapter-IV : THE STATUS OF APPEARANCE

In our previous chapters, we have seen how the doctrine of Appearance plays an important role in the history of vedantic philosophy. In conformity with the Upanisads. Śaṅkara holds that Brahman is the ultimate reality and the world is an appearance of Brahman. And how the world-appearance is related to the Brahman, is the main problem not only of the monistic philosophy of Upanisads but also to the philosophy of Śaṅkara. It is Śaṅkarācharya, who has successfully solved the problem in his Advaita vedānta. For Śaṅkara, the world-appearance is false, an illusion. By falsity, he never denies the world appearance as mere nothing. Nor does he give it any ultimate value which is mistakenly done by the dualistic philosophers. We have seen, how he has solved the problem by introducing the doctrine of Māyā. For Śaṅkara, Māyā is a bridge between the world of experience and Brahman. It is through māyā, that Brahman appears as the world and yet remain unaffected by it. So it will be better for us to have an idea of Brahman, before entering into our main problem about what is the real status of the world-appearance.
I. **Brahman**

Brahman is the ultimate reality according to Śadvśara, the non-dual absolute, which is what Sāstras call as the only object worthy of being known. Now, it is impossible to give any definition of Brahman, as Brahman is indeterminate or Nirguna and Niravayava, featureless and formless. Every determination, every definition, limits the limitless Brahman. So to define Brahman is to involve self-contradiction and to limit the Absolute Brahman. Brahman is the 'that' without the 'what', it is one without a second. 'Eka eva advitiyam!

In Sāstra, Brahman has been characterised from two points, as essential and secondary. Of these, essential characteristics (svarupa lakṣaṇa) consists in the very nature (svarupa) of a thing. Thus śruti says, "Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinite" 'Satyam Jñānamānantaṁ Brahmat Ānanda Brahmaṁ' 'Ānanda Brahmati Vyajanat'.

Brahman is satyam, ie it is not contradicted at any time and is always same and does not change. It is truth, uncontradicted. It is just Is, but since Is is relative to Is-Not, it is beyond Is and Is-Not. It is sat or satya.

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Brahman is jñāna. Jñāna here means not ordinary knowledge which involves the relation of knower and known, the subject-object dualism, which is visayajñāna and vikapajñāna. The knowledge of Brahma is Avisayajñāna and Avikalpajñāna. It is that knowledge which transcends the duality of subject and object, knower and known. Knowledge is thus not the attribute of Brahma. It is Brahma itself.

Brahman is Ananta. It is infinite, eternal and unlimited. It is devoid of all consideration of time, space and causation. Brahma is 'svaśātiya vijātiya svagataḥ bhedarahita' i.e. it is without anything similar to it. It has nothing different from it. There is no internal difference in it. It is thus simple, unique and undifferentiated. It has no genus, no species but is itself a genus. Brahma is thus Akhaṇḍa, Ananta, Aparicchinnā and Aparināmi.

The Upaniṣad says Brahma as "nirguṇa guṇa". Here guṇa does not mean a quality or the guṇa of sāṅkhya philosophy. Thus it is said, "when the Absolute is said to be nirguṇa, this only means that it is trans-empirical, since guṇas are products of prakriti and the Absolute is superior to it".1

Brahman is sometimes, spoken of as sat, cit and ānanda. In the Upaniṣads also, we find Brahman as Saccidānanda Brahman. Thus Brahman is independent, unconditional, self-complete and self-subsisting. Eternal existence (sat). It is self-revealing, self-luminous and ever-effulgent, pure consciousness (cit) and is also unlimited, unexcelable and unalloyed Bliss (Ānanda). These three terms sat, cit and ānanda are not attributes of Brahman but are intended to deny the nature of predication itself. "It is sat (real) meaning that it is not asat (unreal). It is cit (consciousness), meaning that it is not accit (unconsciousness). It is ānanda (bliss) meaning that it is not of the nature of pain (duḥkha svarupa). Sat is thus Being without becoming which transcends the category of time, cit is what pure consciousness. "Brahman is consciousness as such and it never lapses into the self-conscious, the subconscious or the unconscious". It is self-luminous and shines by itself and in itself. Again Brahman is Bliss itself and not blissful. Bliss is not a predicate to Brahman like pleasure, happiness etc. Thus Brahman is sat-cit-ānanda or Being-consciousness-bliss-absolute. The Absolute is

the pure subject without any object, or any predicate. It is thus the Nirguna Brahman.

A secondary characteristic of Brahman is that which is not originally possessed by Brahman but attributed by human being. "As the possession of smell is a (secondary) characteristic of earth, for there is no smell in atoms (of earth) at the dissolution of the universe, nor in jars etc. at the time of their origin, with regard to the subject under discussion (Brahman). Its being the cause of the birth etc. of the universe is such a characteristic" (Yathā Gandhā vattatim Prithvilakṣanam, Māhpralaye Paramānusū, Utpattikāle Ghatādiṣu sa Gandhābhāvat, Prakrite sa Jagajñādi Kāraṇatvaṃ). Thus Brahman is regarded as the cause of origin, maintenance and dissolution from the secondary sense. With regard to the cause of the origin etc. of this universe, the śruti texts says: "Yato bā Īśani Bhūtāni yena Jātāni Jīvantī, Yat Prayantyābhisaṁbianti".

The Tatastha lakṣaṇa of Brahman explain Brahman with attributes. It is saguṇa Brahman. Explaining the definition "Jāmādyasya yataḥ" (Brahma sūtra, 1.1.2), Saṅkara says: "The cause from which proceeds the origin, sustenance and dissolution of the world which is

2. ibid. pp 159-160.
extended in names and forms, which includes many agents and enjoyers, contains the fruit of actions, specially determined according to space, time and cause - a world which is formed after an arrangement inconceivable even for the mind - this Omniscient and Omnipotent cause is Brahman (i.e. saguna or Isvara)\(^1\). That, Isvara is both the material and efficient cause of the world, is directly expressed in various Upanishads.

Thus there are two views regarding the ultimate reality - higher and lower, Parâ and Aparâ, Nirguna and Saguna. Nirguna Brahman can be realized in Brahman-bhava only, in which one realizes the oneness with Brahman, who has such knowledge, can attain the state of moksa. There is no expression in such knowledge, where the subject-object dualism merges. From the empirical knowledge on the otherhand, Brahman is saguna Brahman. Due to ignorance we ascribe qualities, or when we impose attributes to Brahman, these arises the subject-object dualism between Brahman and us. We look Brahman as an object of worship or God. It is the saguna Brahman, where we ascribe the attributes as Omnipotent, Omniscient, all pervading, all powerful, all knowing etc, from our religious point of view. And there arises a vast gap between

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Both determinate (saguṇa) and indeterminate ( Nirguṇa) cannot be ascribed to Brahman at a time, for a reality that has two sides or can be experienced in two ways cannot be the highest reality. When we view Brahman from outside, then we have saguṇa Brahman, when we have an apprehension of Brahman, it is Nirguṇa Brahman. Dr. Radhakrisnan says that the Infinite is not an object constructed by philosophy; it is an ever present fact. As he says, "the moment we think it, it becomes a part of the world of experience".

In the Upaniṣads, the best way of knowing Brahman is described in the negative way Brahman is not knowable, if by knowability is meant an object of knowledge, Brahman, in this sense is not knowable. We cannot have knowledge of Brahman as what Brahman is, for to know what Brahman is, is to know Him as such. So the best way of knowing Brahman is as 'not-this', 'not-this', 'Na-iti, Na-iti'. "It is not one, It is non-two, it is not absolute, it is not non-absolute', it is not sunya, it is not Asunya". So the best way of describing Brahman is through negatives (Neti Neti) by calling it infinite, immutable, indivisible, inexhaustible etc.

The significance of the term *Neti Neti* lies in the fact that it is impossible to know Brahman through ordinary concepts or modes of expression. Positive knowledge is in a sense a limitation, for it involves the duality of the knower and the known, the denotative and the denated. Thus the concept 'Neti Neti' denies the possibility of such knowledge or expression with regard to Brahman.

It must be pointed out that though the expression 'Neti-Neti' deny the knowability of Brahman, yet it does not lead Advaitism to agnosticism. As it is said "The denial of attributes and qualities to Brahman does not reduce It to voidness or in any way consign Advaitism to agnosticism, because the expression 'Neti-Neti' does not deny Reality in its transcendental and absolute nature". It implies that Brahman the pure Being, cannot be grasped by the ordinary empirical knowledge, which is limited and conditioned. So we may have a glimpse of the absolute Reality, through the negative description which serves the purpose of rising up from the phenomenal level towards the highest and finally help the realisation of the Brahman.

II. Status of the World Appearance:

The doctrine of maya suggests that the world is an illusion, it is a creation of the mind. The whole world including that of God are traced to avidya. Now the question is are all appearances merely the subjective idea or creation of the mind? Or are there any objective basis behind the world-appearances? What is the real status of the world?

According to Sankara, the world-appearance is not merely a subjective idea. When the moon appears as double, it is the defective vision that create the single moon as double. Yet this is not merely an idea of mind only. For behind the background of such illusion, there is a real moon, which is misconceived. In his explanation of the world-appearance, Sankara shows that the world-appearance is imposed on Brahman where Brahman remains unaffected by the changes of the world. It is like the case of rope-snake illusion. The snake is attributed to rope, and yet the rope remains unaffected by this change. "A man may in the dark mistake a piece of rope for a snake and run away from it, frightened and trembling. There on another man may tell him, 'Be not afraid, it is only a rope, not a snake', and he may then dismiss the fear caused by the imagined snake and stop running. But all the while the presence and the subsequent absence of his erroneous notion as to the rope being a snake make
no difference whatever to the rope itself. Hence the world appearance is not merely a subjective idea.

Avidyā, according to Śaṅkara in itself cannot be the cause of the world. Śaṅkara equated avidyā with Pradhāna or Prakṛti of sāṁkhya. Śaṅkara himself vehemently criticises the sāṁkhya view of Prakṛti. Similarly, Śaṅkara rejects the Buddhists view of sunya-vāda that nothing exists, neither matter nor mind, everything is relative. The view of Kṣaṇkavāda is also rejected by Śaṅkara according to which everything exists only for a moment. The view of subjectivism (Vijñānavāda) is also rejected by Śaṅkara, according to which the external world is nothing but merely the subjective idea of mind. Thus he refuted the view that the world is a mere product of avidyā. Dr. Radhakrisnan had remarked that 'Avidyā in Śaṅkara is not a mere subjective force, but has an objective reality'. Thus Avidyā has a positive character, an objective force, which exists both in a gross and subtle form.

According to Śaṅkara, Brahma is the supreme reality which is the basis of the world appearance. If there is nothing behind the world-appearance, then we will

2. Ibid. P - 582.
have to embrace nihilism like Buddhists and treat all teachings as purposeless. According to Radhakrisnan, "The pluralistic universe is an error of judgment. Correction of the error means change of opinion. The rope is erroneously judged as snake, and when the illusion is over, the snake returns to the rope. Similarly the world-appearance become transfigured in the intuition of Brahman. The world-appearance is not negated in knowledge, rather it is reinterpreted.

That the appearance is not a mere fiction is also can be proved from the concept of Jivanmukti. The attainment of Jivanmukti here in this life, the distinction of values, of truth and error, of virtue and vice, and the idea of attaining mokṣa through the world of experience - all these facts confirm to the fact that there is reality behind these appearances. So "Brahman is in the world, though not as the world".1

So, the world-appearance is not baseless. As Saṅkara says, "A barren woman cannot be said to give birth to a child either in reality or in illusion".2 If the world be regarded as baseless, as not rooted in any reality like the barren woman's child, then we shall have to

2. ibid. P - 583.
reject all realities even that of Brahman.

The world-appearance is based on Brahman. It is like the snake which is based on the rope. As Radhakrishnan says, "What is based on the real, and is not the real itself, can only be called the appearance or phenomenon of the real". The world is not the essential truth of Brahman, it is its phenomenal truth, it is the absolute which is characterized by us through our finite experiences.

In order to ascertain the real status of appearance, we will have to know what exactly is the criterion of truth in Advaita Vedanta by which the validity and invalidity of a judgment is determined. So let us explain about the criterion of truth.

III. (a) Criterion of Truth:

A criterion is a practical device for testing the validity or invalidity of one's knowledge or experience. Thus a criterion enables us to discriminate between truth and error or between the real and unreal. Thus a successful criterion must fulfil atleast two conditions, (a) It must be applicable and (b) It must apply to or explain the well known cases of error.

By the applicability of the criterion, it is meant that the criterion must be applicable with in a
definite logical limit, i.e. it must have a beginning and an end. Śaṅkara says that it is impossible for us to go beyond experience or knowledge. To the opponents view that if Brahman is unknown, it cannot at all be desired to be known, the reply of Śaṅkara lies in the fact that the Brahman is not altogether unknown. Desire to know (jijñāsā) implies that Brahman can be known. "The knowable can never exist without knowable, i.e. without being known".1 So Śaṅkara declares that, "the entire universe, consisting of names and forms must be taken to be known - known to somebody, somewhere, in some degree".2

Secondly, a criterion must be able to explain the well known cases of error or illusory appearances. In this sense the test of 'conative satisfaction (pravṛtti-sāarthya)', it would appear, fails to satisfy this condition. The 'conative satisfaction' means the tendency or capacity of knowledge to fulfil the expected result. Thus my perception of a snake in the rope will be true if it subsequently bites and kills me is true. Now the question is, are all cases of right knowledge lead to such type of satisfaction?

Such conditions are, in fact, concern with psychological side of conation, and not logical. As Śaṅkara

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2. ibid - P. 115.
remarks, "death may result not only from actual poisoning, but also from a strong suspicion that one has been poisoned." Again, "the magic elephant evokes all the reactions which a real elephant does (G.K.N. 44.4.)." So such pragmatic test of truth fails to lead to certainty.

According to Śaṅkara, non-contradiction and novelty are regarded as the characteristics of truth. Anything that is contradicted and sublated cannot be true. Novelty, however, is not an invariable condition of truth. Thus it is said in the Vedānta Paribhāṣā that, "if recollection is excluded from it, then valid knowledge would mean that knowledge which has far its object something that is uncontradicted (Tatra Śrītyāyārttaṁ Premātvamanadhitatā-bādhitarthavisayaka Jñānatvam Śrīti-sādhāranantu Abādhitāya-yāvadhitavajñānatvam)."

Another test of truth is the principle of non-contradiction (abādha) in Śaṅkara. Thus, knowledge which is uncontradicted is truth. In the Vedānta Paribhāṣā, it is said, "Abādhiṣṭa-Padena Śrīśāra-dāśayāmabādhitattvāṁ Vivakṣitāṁ, iti na Ghatādīpamāyāmavyāptiḥ." This means, "the word 'uncontradicted' means, 'not contradicted during the transmigratory state' and therefore the definition is

1. ibid. - P. 122.
2. ibid. - P. 122.
4. ibid. PP. 7-8.
not too narrow to include the valid knowledge of a jar etc". A straight stick appears bent when emerged in water. Its crookedness in water is as real to the eye is its straightness to the touch. Touch corrects the knowledge of the stick. But so long as we perceive the stick in the water, it is bent and is a true knowledge. It becomes false when we have the contradictory experience. Dream experience are also real so long as dream lasts, but it becomes false when it is contradicted by waking life. Similarly, the world-experience is true so long as we experience it, but its illusoriness comes to light when we have the absolute experience (Brahmanubhava). "This is the highest, since there is no other knowledge that can contradict it". In this highest knowledge, the distinction between knower and known are merged into one.

(b) The Theory of Svatah Prāmāṇya:

According to Śāṅkara, knowledge is self-revealed or svakrakāśa. Just as a light reveal itself and need no further light to reveal itself, the consciousness or knowledge reveal the object with any extrinsic condition. Thus according to the vedāntists, consciousness is self-

revealed; it is its own light; and it cannot become an object of knowledge.

Śaṅkara is in agreement with the Mīmāṃsakas regarding the self-revealing nature of knowledge. But the Mīmāṃsaka view involve the fallacy of infinite regress when it says that knowledge cannot be directly apprehended, it is inferred. If the validity of a cognition A is dependent on another cognition B, then it require a third cognition C to guarantee the validity of B, and then D and so on ad infinitum.

Śaṅkara is not clearly discussing the question of 'validity', in his theory of knowledge. He is admitting relative validity (vyavahārika satya) to this world of experience. "All empirical knowledge' says Śaṅkara, 'is true until the Ātman is known to be one with Brahman, just as dream-experiences are true before one awakes to consciousness'.¹ Thus, unlike Mādhyamika, Śaṅkara remarks that all empirical knowledge cannot be negated without the knowledge of a higher reality.

According to the Advaita Vedānta, knowledge is not only self-revealing but also self-validating. 'Jñāyate sa prāmāṇyaś Statah', i.e. 'The validity of knowledge is also spontaneously apprehended'.² So knowledge is valid by

2. Vedanta Paribhasa.
its own condition is the very condition of knowledge is also the condition of its validity, it must be intrinsic to knowledge.

According to the Advaita Vedanta, there is no such knowledge as neutral or characterless cognition. Every cognition must be either valid or invalid. Even doubt (Samaya) is not a neutral cognition, rather it is a form of invalid cognition. Further, if knowledge is not intrinsically valid, it can never be made valid by any extrinsic character.

As to the invalidity of knowledge the Vedantists hold that it is extrinsic to knowledge. Thus, while validity is intrinsic, invalidity is accidental and due to some defects which are external to the condition of knowledge (Karanadaga). "Apamanyantu na jnanaasamyasamagrPrayojan Pranayamsapramanyapatte; Kintu Doaprayojyan". "The invalidity of knowledge, however, is not due to the totality of causes of knowledge in general, for in that case even valid knowledge would be invalid; but it is due to some (adventitious) defects". So invalidity is conditioned by conditions, other than those of the knowledge itself. Every knowledge is thus intrinsically valid and when only knowledge is found to be invalid, it is due to

the fact that it is contradicted by some other knowledge or because it is perceived to arise from some defects in its natural conditions. "The invalidity of knowledge is thus both constituted and known by external conditions other than the conditions of knowledge itself."¹

The svatahprāmāṇyavāda of the Advaita is in accord with the Mīmāṁsā system. But whether the validity is intrinsic or extrinsic is a disputed fact in the various systems of Indian Philosophy. The Sāṁkhya consider both truth and error as intrinsic. The Baudhāyas on the other hand, hold that error is intrinsic and truth is extrinsic which is quite antithesis to the view of Advaita. The Naiyāyikas, on the other hand regard both as truth and falsity as extrinsic in character. And as these problems are not our concern, so we are abstaining from explaining them in details.

IV. Levels of Reality:

In our normal life, we experience so many thing in this world. These are real as our experiences are real. Thus a stick appears as bent, when emerged in water and this bent form is a fact of experience, a fact that cannot be rejected. We may reject it later on.

Likewise, a rope appears as a snake and we experience the snake. This is a positive fact of experience, possibly, it is due to the fact that the man who have the experience of a snake, may afraid to go in the dark, or he knows that snake is usually found in that place and so on. So it is this mental disposition coupled with the ignorance of the rope in its essential nature and the general awareness of the zigzag form of the rope which happen to be a common element with the rope and the snake and all these are responsible to rouse the memory of the snake and there arisen the perception of snake. And this perception is a positive one, so long as the knowledge of the rope does not arise.

Now, the world-appearance is due to Māyā and it is a fact established even in the Upanisads. And the main contribution of Śaṅkara in Advaita vedānta is to establish the unreality of the world-appearance in order to maintain the absolute idealism of vedānta. So it leads naturally to the question as to the real status of the world-appearance. What does this world illusion mean to us? Is it totally unreal? Is it simply false? How is it related to the Brahman of which it is an appearance? In order to solve these problems, the Advaitins have introduce three levels of existence. They are Pāramārtika
sattā, Vyavahārika sattā and Pratibhāsika sattā.

From the Advaitic point of view, there is only one, absolute and ultimate reality, which is the eternal existence, the Brahman. The world of things and beings are only apparent manifestation of the Brahman due to Avidya. Thus from the absolute or paramāarthika level, reality is one and it admits of no degree or differentiation and that besides this one reality, the Brahman, there is no other reality whether in empirical or illusory form. "Thus the exponent of this view do not tolerate the recognition of any separate or empirically distinct type of phenomenal realities, as one and the same Reality is enough to explain all realities".  

Thus from the Pāramāarthika level, the world-appearances are false and it is due to avidyā. But the world appearance is not wholly unreal or absolute nothing. It has an apparent and relative reality. The idealistic philosopher deny the reality of the external world. Saṅkara is not prepared to ascribe reality, even to mental events over and above the physical events. What he meant to say is that so long as the empirical world continued to be perceived, both the external and the internal world are

accepted as facts, as reals. Hence, the world has a reality of its own, which is distinguished from absolute reality and it is called Vyavahārika Satya, ie, reality as far as it is necessary for the practical purpose.

"The object of a dream, although known as false on waking, are real within the limits of the dream. Similarly, the world is also relatively real and is said to be false (mithyā) only when knowledge dawns".  

The superiority of Vyavahārika Satya, can be understood. When we compare it with the Prātibhāṣika satya. Thus the illusory appearance of snake in the rope is in the level of Prātibhāṣika level. It is a false appearance, yet it is not altogether unreal, non-existent (alīka) like the son of a barren woman or the hare's horn. So, "Śaṅkara is even prepared to grant some reality to the rajju-Sarpu (the snake in the rope), which he calls Prātibhāṣika Satyatva (seeming reality) as distinguished from the other two kinds of reality." Thus the snake has some reality as it can create the same reaction to the mind of the perceiver, like the real snake, so long as the illusion lasts. Its fertility can be realised only when the perceiver can perceive the rope.

2. ibid. P. 243.
It must be pointed out that there is much similarity between Sākhara's illusionism and the so-called Buddhists nihilism. Thus in the Sunyavāda of Māgārjuna and Chandrakirti, there is also discussion of the absolute truth and limited truth. Thus Māgārjuna says in his 'Mādhyamika Sūtra' that Buddha's philosophy is based on the two levels of truth, truth as veiled by ignorance (sāmvrṭi-satya) and truth as unqualified and ultimate (parmārtha-satya).

According to the Buddhists, the whole world of our experience of causes and effects, which we perceive and of which we have the experience in our everyday life, is the result of ignorance. There is nothing real and absolute in the world as each and every entity of this world is produced by other things or entities; and they again by others, and we cannot ascertain any nature of each one of them without reference to others, which produce them, and from which they originated and tracing them again to other causes and so on. So it is not possible to assert anything of its own nature or character (svabhāva). Nothing is produced by itself and they are the product of different entities combined. Thus everything in the world is relative, conditioned. "The apparent reality of the world has therefore the mysterious
veil of ignorance over it, and it is this veil of ignorance which is referred to by the term Loka-saṃvṛta. This is spoken of also as tathya-saṃvṛti (real-ignorance), as distinguished from mithyā-saṃvṛti (false ignorance), properly used of the ordinary illusions and hallucinations of magic, mirage reflections, etc. 1 The falsehood of the world-appearance can be realised only when their real nature (paramārthrupa) is realised and understood. So long as this ultimate truth is not attained, the world appearance is considered as real and all our knowledge granted this world-appearance as real in itself and try to give a rational analysis and estimate of them. The appearance of a world as reality is true only for a limited period of time so long as the veil of ignorance is not removed from our eyes; and this is designated as Loka-saṃvṛta. It is compared with the illusion of snake in the rope or mirrage in a desert. And the falsehood of the world is realised when the right knowledge arises like the illusion of snake is realised, when the knowledge of rope come to our view.

Now the question is - if the world-appearance has no essence of its own, how is it that it appears to have one, or how is it that the world phenomena appear at

all? What is the basis of this world-appearance? In 'Mādhyamika-Sūtra', Nāgārjuna gives an explanation of the world-appearance as like that of the appearance of mirrage or dream, which have no reality of its own, and which still has an objective appearance of reality. The world is not merely a nothing (Sunya) like a lotus of the sky or the hare's horn, which is purely non-existent (avidyamātra). Thus the world-appearance is not true in the absolute sense (paramārtha satya), but it has the relative truth (Loka-samvṛta) as different from the sense-illusions, hallucinations and the like which are contradicted in ordinary experience (aloka-samvṛta or mithyā-samvṛti), which are merely non-existent like the hare's horn. In Candrakirti's commentary on the Mādhyamika-sūtra, we find an explanation of the world illusion as, "the error (viparyaya) of world-appearance is considered as being of four kinds, viz. the consideration of the momentary as eternal, the consideration of the painful as being pleasurable, the consideration of the unholy as holy and of that which has no soul as having a soul".\(^1\) Candrakirti has given the example, in which a man see in a dream that he is spending the night with the wife of the king, and

\(^1\) S.N. Dasgupta. A History of Indian Philosophy. Vol.II. P. 5.
suddenly realizing that he is discovered, tries to fly for fear of his wife. Mere illusion consists in perceiving the presence of a woman, where there is none. So also in the world illusion, according to Candrakirti, we have the world experience where there is none.

As different from the Buddhists, Śaṅkara in his Introduction to the commentary on the Brahma-sūtra, says that the essence of all illusory perception is that one thing is mistaken for another, that the qualities, characteristics or attributes of one thing is mistaken for the qualities, characteristics or attributes of another. Thus a conch-shell appears as silver or that one moon appears as double. In his commentary on 'Gaudāpāda-Kārikā', Śaṅkara says that when a rope appears as a snake, there is merely a false imposition of snake in the rope and there is no real existence of snake or there is nothing in which the snake is falsely ascribed. Thus for Śaṅkara the false creation must have some objective basis and on this point both Gaudāpāda and Śaṅkara differ from the Sunyavādin Buddhists. If a rope appears as a snake the appearance of snake has some objective basis in the rope and there could not be any false appearance without any firm basis of truth underlying them. Nāgārjuna tried to prove the falsity of all appearances
on the ground of their being interdependent and not having anything which has the appearance of its own. "The diabetic being applicable to all appearances, there was nothing left which was not relative and interdependent, nothing which was self-evident by nature and which was intelligible by itself without reference to anything else. It is this interdependence and relativity of all appearances that was called 'nothingness' or 'sunyatā' by Nāgārjuna". Thus all appearances are interdependent and relative, and there is no basis of truth anywhere, no essence of anything. But Śaṅkara and Gauḍapāda hold that the inner world of thought, ideas, emotions, volitions and the outer world of objects are considered as being illusory appearances consist in the dogmatic statement that all appearances are false just as dream experiences are false. Thus the underlying unity, the unchanging basis on which the world appearance is imposed is the self (ātman) or Brahman, which is the only reality that is permanent and unchanging. "The world was an illusion; and Brahman was the basis of truth on which these illusions appeared; for even illusions required something on which they could appear".

2. ibid. P. II.
Thus Śaṅkara admits different degree of reality. No appearance is so low that the Absolute can not embrace it. It is the reality which appears and hence every appearance must have some degree of truth in it, though none can be absolutely false. Thus Śaṅkara admits three levels of truth - the Pāramārthika, the Vyavahārika and the Prātibhāsika level. Prātibhāsika existence is non-existence. It is the realm of illusions. It is 'Kalpita-eva', is imagined. The rope-snake illusion is Prātibhāsika knowledge. It is self-contradictory and is contradicted by Bādhaka jñāna of the rope. It is what the Mādhyamika called 'mithyā-samvṛti.' Vyavahārika knowledge and truth are also Kalpita stage. The difference in the rope-snake illusion and the world illusion lies in the fact that the world lasts longer than the snake and that while the rope snake illusion is strictly 'private', the world illusion is a 'public' experience. Vyavahārika knowledge lasts for long period, until it is contradicted by 'bādhaka-jñāna' of Brahman. It is what Gauḍapāda called 'Samvṛti satya' and the Mādhyamika called called 'Tathya samvṛti'. Pāramārthika is the only real existence. It is the knowledge of the non-dual Absolute which is the realm of uncontradicted, infinite, which is beyond time, space and cause. It is the real, the Parāvidya, the Absolute Brahman.
The author of 'Vedānta Paribhāsa' also clearly distinguishes between three levels of existence. "Existence is three-fold - absolute existence, relative existence and illusory existence. Of Brahman there is absolute existence of other etc., there is relative existence and silver seen in a nacre was illusory existence." Tribidha Satya - Paramārthika, Vyavahārika, Pratibhāsikā Sattamākāsedeh, Pratibhāsikā Sattā Suktirajatāda". (Ch. II).

So, we may come to the conclusion that the real status of the world appearance is the relative reality (Vyavahārika satta). As the non-contradiction is the criterion of reality, so what is self-discrepant or contains contradiction in itself, can have no place in Reality. The reality is that what is avidhata or cannot be contradicted, and in this sense, Caitanya, or consciousness alone can be regarded as Reality. So "...... it is consciousness or Intelligence alone that answers to the criterion of non-contradiction, the objects of consciousness as other than consciousness being liable all alike to be sublated or falsified". Thus the object of consciousness i.e. the world of things and events are other than reality. But this is not correct to say that

objects are simply nothing, such as the void or sunya of the Buddhists. Thus the world appearances have some kind of positivity from the phenomenal point of view though they are not real in the strict sense or ultimate sense. Appearances are thus positive and presented objective facts which is liable to be contradicted by the Absolute reality or Brahmanabhava i.e. the realisation of Brahman.

V. Dream Experience:

According to Gaudapāda and Śaṅkara the world experience is comparable with the dream experience i.e., there is much similarity between the world experience and dream experience. The dream is illusory, a false experience when it is compared with waking life; but yet dreams are not totally false. It has some relative value. It is real so long as the dream lasts, its falsity can be realised only when the man is in a waking stage. Similarly, the world-appearance is also real until the Brahman is not realised. After the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman, man can realise the illusoriness of the world.

Let us examine some characters of dream experience. We see in a dream, the chariot, the horses etc. though there is no actual chariot or horses, and these
experiences are as real to us as the concrete things are in the waking life. But the unreality of dream is ascertained when it is contradicted by the experiences of the waking life. Even in some cases, it is contradicted by the experiences in the dream itself. As for instance, a three in the dream may soon appear as a man and a man as an elephant. In some other places, Saṅkara again maintains that the dream is connected with the waking life. The dream event has some prophetic character as it can forecast the future events. "Coming events of the waking life cast their shadows before in the dream. There are warnings and premonitions in a dream. Like the experiences of the waking life, the dream also, it is said, are the effects of the impressions of the actions and desires of the previous life".¹ It is therefore, said that though dreams are the creation of the individual mind, yet they are ultimately said to be imparted by God or the highest Lord. Again according to Saṅkara, dream cannot be condemned as purely false, as it has some living connection with the waking life.

"The trembling and the weeping due to fear and grief in the dream condition continues for sometimes, even after the dream is over and the man is fully awake."² Again

¹. V.M.Oate, Vedānta Explained. Vol.II. P. 476.
². ibid. P - 176.
the fact that man can recall the dream event with the same vividness and interest as objects of the real experience also prove that dream is not much unlike the actual concrete world. All these shows that dream is not as unreal as it is supposed to be.

Though dream experiences are more or less similar with the waking experience, yet as explained by Mr. V. W. Date, in his famous book 'Vedanta Explained', we find that dream experiences are less valuable than our waking experiences. Firstly, during the states of dreams, the waking life is neither real nor unreal. The world of dream is the only real and the valuable world. In the dreaming state, so, no comparison can be made between the dreaming and the waking life. It is only in the waking state, that we can make the comparison between them and even the unreality of the dream experience in as much as the objects seen in the dream continue to exist in the waking life and serve any purposes of our waking life.

By making a comparison between the world-experience with the dream experience, what Śaṅkara means to say is that the world experience is not absolute non-existence, it has a relative reality. It is real so long as the higher knowledge is not aroused, like the dream
experience which is real so long as the man is not awakened from sleep. "Dreams are real so long as we dream; waking experiences so long as we do not dream or sleep. Dreamless sleep from which we pass into waking or dream is as unreal as the other states, and all the three disclose their relative character when the individual wakes up, "from the sleep of delusion, which has no beginning, and realises the unborn, ever awake, dreamless, one, without a second." 1

Śaṅkara accepts two types of experience as 'private' and 'public' and regards the dream object and its experience, the illusory objects and its experiences are purely individual and private. These experiences are not shared by anybody even by one who sleeps nearby or stands nearby and these experiences are even not ratified by anyone else. It is thus strictly private to the experiencer who experience the dream or illusion and does not forms part of a second person's experience. As soon as the dream ends, the unreality and illusoriness is realised by the individual. But the case is not the same in the world experience. The things of waking life are public or collective experience. Nobody can deny the

waking experience. Thus Śaṅkara positively admits the reality of the waking life or world experience and in this sense he may be confused with realists. But this is not correct. For, Śaṅkara is not satisfied with this empirical validity of the world. He goes beyond this empirical world and admit that reality associated with this empirical world is not ultimate or final. "The only characteristic of the empirically real (Vyavahārika Satya), experienced and ratified by 'public' endorsement, is that it is more durable than the reality of the dream or illusory object (Prātibhānīka Satya) which can only be experienced and attested by the individual".¹

In estimating the value of dream and waking state, we can regard the waking state as more valuable than the dream state. The waking state are more powerful than dream as in the dream life we cannot have an apprehension of Reality. "Being merely a passive spectator, the dreamer has to remain a slave of avidyā, and at the mercy of fate, and as such, the consciousness of the dreaming condition is removed at a greater distance from the undifferentiated consciousness of the Atman, than it is in the waking condition".²


2. V.M.Date. Vedanta Explained. P. 177.
So the waking life is according to Śaṅkara is more real than the dream, because the waking state contradicts the dream state but is not contradicted by it. Again, the waking state is more concrete, tangible and enduring in comparison to dream state. The dream experiences are purely subjective, whereas the waking experiences have an objective common world and not merely an imaginary idea. The most important point of waking life is that the value judgments are applicable only in this state and not in the dream state. And above all, it is only in the waking state that the apprehension of Brahman is possible. We can have in this world, the attainment of the state of Jīvanmukta, the most precious state, aspired by human being.

VI. Causation:

The status of the world-appearance can best be understood, when we consider the doctrine of causation in Advaita vedānta. We know that whatever is of the nature of an effect, must have a cause, for the effect is not self-existent or self-explanatory. Thus an effect must have a cause and this cause must be not only necessary, but also adequate to account for the effect.

Now, the world-appearance is undoubtedly of the nature of becoming. It is an effect, so it must have
a cause. In the history of Indian Philosophy, various theories are put forward for the explanation of causation. The Nyāya-Vaiśesika has explained that the ultimate reality of this universe is the Atoms or Padārtha from which the world of manifoldness come into existence. They accept the theory of Asatkārya-vāda i.e. the theory that the effect is a new creation from the causes. Thus this theory holds that production is a new beginning.

As different from this, the Sāmkhya holds that the causation is the production of Pradhāna or Prakṛti. They uphold the theory of Sat-kāryavāda i.e. the theory that the effect pre-exist in the cause before its production and hence production is a manifestation of the already existing causes. Thus in any production there is no new creation but only the explicit form of what is implicit in the cause or what is pre-existed in the causes. But both the Sāmkhya and the Nyāya-Vaiśesika views, apart from other difficulties, involved in their conception, as the ultimate cause of the world, can explain neither the orderly arrangement and harmony experienced in the world nor their own activities. Śaṅkara, therefore, rightly maintained that the ultimate cause of this vast, wonderful and well-designed, world must be the omniscient and omnipotent Isvāra alone who is the ultimate cause of
Gauḍapāda, the great grand teacher of Śāṅkara, in his 'Māṇḍukya-Kārikā', has discussed the problem of causation in details and his theory is known as 'Ājātivāda'. According to Gauḍapāda, there is actually nothing like origination, it is a mere illusion. Gauḍapāda's central philosophy is, "No jiva is born, there is no cause for it, this is the supreme truth; Nothing whatever is born" (Māṇḍukya Kārikā).¹

Gauḍapāda thus maintained the theory of Ājātivāda and hold that there is no creation in the ultimate sense and he explained the world creation with the analogy of dream. "Just as in dream, the mind, through Māyā, vibrate into the appearance of the two, the seer and the seen, so in waking state alone, the mind vibrate into the appearance of the two, the seer and the seen".²

Śāṅkara adopted the theory of causation in accordance with his predecessor Gauḍapāda. Thus from the Ontological side or from the ultimate sense, he accepts the doctrine of Ājātivāda of Gauḍapāda, but on the

2. Ibid. 62.
phenomenal level, he advocates the theory of Satkāryavāda, which is more or less similar to the Śāṅkhya view. Thus according to Śaṅkara, an effect must pre-exist in its cause before production. If it does not pre-exist in it, or not identical with it, then it cannot be produced from it. Oil cannot be pressed out of sands. Thus Śaṅkara put forward the arguments which are much like Śāṅkhya view of Satkāryavāda. He even advanced some arguments against the Asatkāryavāda theory which are the same as advanced by Śāṅkhya in Śāṅkhya-Kārikā. Of course there are some arguments which seem to be Śaṅkara's own.

It must be remembered that the Satkāryavāda of Śaṅkara is not a photostat copy of Śāṅkhya theory. For there is the most important point on which the theory differ, that in Śāṅkhya, the root cause ie. the prakṛti is material, unconscious, from which the universe arises, which is the main point of criticism - as to how the conscious world comes from unconscious agent. According to Śaṅkara, Brahman is pure consciousness, which is the ultimate cause of the whole universe. Brahman, due to Avidyā, becomes God, who is attributed as the creator of this universe. Thus God is both the efficient and the material cause, according to Śaṅkara.
As the major portion of this universe is found to be unconscious, so there is difference in character between God and the world appearance. Hence there arises some objections against Śaṅkara's view of Īśvara as being both the material and the efficient cause of the world. Thus in his commentary on Vedānta-Sūtra, II.6. Śaṅkara meets some objections raised against his view of causation.

It is objected that Brahman or Īśvara cannot be the cause of the world because the former being pure and consciousness, cannot be the cause of the world which is impure and unconsciousness in its nature. Śaṅkara meets this objection by saying that the cause and effect may not be of the same nature. Thus he cited the example of unconscious hairs and nails originate from the conscious human being or other animals. Again, the intelligent things such as scorpion etc. are produced from the non-intelligent matter such as cowdung etc. The opponent, here raises another objection. The real cause of unintelligent hair, nail etc. are the human body, which is itself non-intelligent, and similarly, is itself non-intelligent, and, similarly the real effect of the non-intelligent cowdung etc. over the bodies of the scorpions, which are themselves non-intelligent and they maintain that there is
no difference in character between the cause and the effect. But Saṅkara insists that there is still a difference. For the non-intelligent body of scorpion is the abode of an intelligent principle i.e. the scorpion's soul which is surely different from the cow dung. Thus there must be difference between cause and effect. The very fact that one is called as cause and another as effect, also implies some sort of distinction between them. Similarly, Brahman and its effect the world is also same as both are existent (satta). But there is an important difference between Brahman and the world as cause and effect. Thus it is said, "Where identity between cause and effect is stressed, it is not absolute identity, it is identity only with regard to the matter of which both are constituted. But there is difference with regard to form". Thus, there is a real change in cause and effect from empirical level and Saṅkara is, in this sense, a parivāmavādin, atleast on the phenomenal plane.

Another serious objection raised against Saṅkara, is regarding the instrumental causes. According to Saṅkara, Brahman is the only reality and it is the cause of the world-appearance. But the question is how the

world-appearance comes out of Brahman without any instrumental cause. It is generally known to us that in the production of pot or cloth, there require a potter or a weaver to make the pot or the cloth. So the question is, how Brahman, being one without a second, can effect the world? The reply made by Śaṅkara is that the instrumental cause is not a necessary condition. There are examples, where instrumental causes are not necessary for the production of the effect. Thus in the cause of milk, "(Ksīravad Dravyasatasāsūnibhavisesād Upapadyate, S.B.II.i, 25), milk turns into curd without the aid of any external agency and similarly water turn into ice without any external agency". It may be argued, here that milk actually takes the help of 'heat', in order to turn into curd, which serves as the instrumental causes. Here, the answer given by Śaṅkara is that it is the peculiar nature of the causal substance itself. That makes it possible to turn into the effect and no external help can make the cause turn into the effect. The instrumental cause, on the phenomenal level, can only serve the purpose of accelerate the process of creation. Thus milk by itself also undergo a change into curd. The function of 'heat' etc. helps only to make the process

1. Ibid. p. 73.
speedy. "If milk did not itself possess the nature of turning into curd, heat etc. could not have turned it into curd forcibly. Air or other, we see, are not compelled by heat etc., to change into curd". Thus Śāṅkara meets the objection raised against his instrumental causality.

There are other arguments also which Śāṅkara meets against him which are not discussed here in details. Śāṅkara thus establishes the phenomenal causality to Brahman. Brahman has the absolute power, who does not require any external agency to create this world. Brahman is thus regarded by Śāṅkara as both the material cause and the instrumental cause of the world.

Thus from the phenomenal level, Śāṅkara has given the theory of causation which is like that of Saṁkhya theory of causation. But on the absolute plane, there is no room for parināmavāda in Śāṅkara’s philosophy. So from the ultimate point of view, Śāṅkara’s theory of causation is known as Vivartavāda.

Brahman, for Śāṅkara, is the only one, absolute reality. It is Nirguṇa, i.e. Brahman is eternal bliss, indivisible, unknowable, self-luminous and infinite. Now the

1. ibid. - p- 73.
category of causation implies, finiteness, impermanence, divisibility, immutable and limitedness to Brahman. So how the quality of creatorship are ascribed to Brahman? How is it that the causal relation is possible in Brahman?

According to Śaṅkara, Brahman is not a cause in the ordinary sense of causality. Indeed, it is the cause of the world in the sense in which the rope is the cause of the snake. Thus, "When in illusion, we perceive a snake in a rope, the rope is the cause of the snake in the sense, that, it is the basis of the superimposition of the snake". The rope is as it is, whether it appears as snake or otherwise. Thus the appearance of snake in the rope is only illusion. It is not a real change. It is therefore called a Vivarta or an unreal transformation of Brahman. Thus Brahma being the only reality and this reality being immutable, the change or mutation is not real, it is false. Thus the world-appearance on Brahman is only illusory appearance and ontologically there is no appearance.

According to Śaṅkara, the whole universe, being the effect of Brahman, is not different from Brahman. As has already been said, the world-appearance is only the superimposition on Brahman. "A superimposed attribute,

1. ibid. p.: 74.
says Śaṅkara, has no reality apart from its substratum, it is the substratum that appears like that through delusion." As the world is superimposed on Brahman, so the world has no separate reality apart from Brahman. This can very well be understood when we realise the relation between substance and attributes. Just as the attributes have no reality apart from substance, so also the world has no existence apart from Brahman. Again just as the appearance of attributes as different from substance is false, similarly, the appearance of the world as different from Brahman is false. Hence the world is not different from Brahman.

VI. Parināmavāda and Vivartavāda:

We have seen that the theory parināmavāda means that the effect is non-different from its cause. A vivartavāda, on the other hand implies that, the effect is the illusory appearance of the cause. A pot, for example, is a parināma of clay while the apparent silver is only a vivarta of the mother of a pearl. In the former case, the cause, i.e. the clay and the effect i.e. the pot, are of the same nature as both are empirically real. But in the case of silver and mother of pearl, both are not same.

1. ibid. p. - 75.
as the mother of pearl is empirically real whereas the silver is only illusory. According to Śaṅkara, the world is only an appearance (vivarta) of Brahma and not as real transformation (Parināma). The world is of changing nature. So it can not be viewed as a form of the unchanging Brahma. "Śaṅkara therefore, views it as something superimposed on Brahma, and not as an actual evolute or out growth of it." 1 This is the higher or ultimate view of reality which is called as vivartavāda. But from the lower point of view, or from the empirical point of view, Śaṅkara is an advocate of parināmavāda. Thus according to Śaṅkara, the world is the transformation or parināma of Īśvara associated with māyā, which is also called as prakṛti.

Thus we find that Śaṅkara has advocates both parināmavāda and vivartavāda. The world, according to him, is a transformation (parināma) of Īśvara's māyā but an appearance (vivarta) of Brahma. Now the question is whether the world as parināma and vivarta of Brahma is compatible with Advaitic doctrine or not ? Again, the parināma generally connote the reality and 'vivarta', the unreality of the world. So this leads also the question, whether

the world is real or unreal?

Generally, it is held by all the philosophers of India, that the world is either parināma or vivarta and as a consequence we have the upholder of these two views, and they regard parināma and vivarta as oppose and are therefore incompatible with each other.

Now, so far as Śaṅkara is concerned neither of these two views are incompatible with each other. Both have got some relative value to the world. As held by V.M. Date, in his 'Vedānta Explained' we may support the view that "The world is real not because it is the vivarta on it", and so, "it is real because it is nothing else but Brahman, it is unreal, because it is taken to be something other than Brahman. With Brahman, the world is real, without it is unreal". Thus it is only from the point of view of parināma and vivarta that the philosophers have regarded the world as reality or unreality and held that both parināma and vivarta as incompatible with each other. But according to Śaṅkara, they are not incompatible. For Śaṅkara, parināma and vivarta taken separately are both dogmatic and one sided. Thus he has taken both the kinds of illustrations to explain the relation between the world and Brahman. V.M. Date has therefore remarked that, "if

1. V.M. Date. Vedanta Explained. P. 492.
parināma and vivarta were to be the sole criteria of reality, the Ācārya would appear as breathing hot and cold at the same time". So we may remark that the traditional notion of parināma and vivarta as incompatible with each other is arbitrary and false. Again both the theory are also not applicable at the same time to the world causality. The correct view will be that from the phenomenal point of view, the world causality is parināmavāda i.e. the world appearance is a real creation of God. And from the ontological point of view, the world is a vivarta, i.e. the illusory appearance of Brahman is due to māyā. Thus the world appearance, is, as Śaṅkara hold, like a snake on the rope, a mirrage on the desert, silver on the shell, a cattle in the clouds. All these illustrations are made from the ultimate point of view. From the phenomenal point of view, on the otherhand, the world appearance is explained with the illustration of pot made of clay, an ornament of gold, curds of milk, a ripple on water a piece of cloth out of threads etc.

So, the real status of the snake on the rope or ornament on the gold, lies in the fact that when snake appears on the rope, the rope is not really transformed

1. V.M.Date. Vedanta Explained. P. 492.
into the snake. It is only a name that is imposed on the rope. Similarly, what else is the ornament except the appearance of a name and a form over and above the gold, and we call it as the transformation of gold into various ornaments. According to Śaṅkara, "whatever is made of gold is forever of the nature of gold, even so everything born of Brahman must be of the nature of Brahman". Thus the ornaments are nothing but a name appearing on the gold, as silver appearing on the shell. On the same reason, we may say that the world-appearance is nothing but Brahman, the name or appearance, which is superimposed on Brahman is due to Avidyā. As the gold-ornaments have no status apart from gold, the world-appearance has no separate status apart from Brahman. And this is the sole reality, realisable through the Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara.