

CHAPTER - 5

THE CONCEPT OF MAYĀ IN SRI

AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY :

THE CONCEPTION OF MĀYĀ IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY

(15th August, 1872 - 5th December, 1950)

I. Introductory Remarks about the Aim and Objective of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy :

Sri Aurobindo is one of the finest interpreters of modern Indian philosophy who by the rare multidimensionality of his genius, astoundingly remarkable profundity of intellectual acumen, creative insight gifted with the spirit of synthesis, discovered our own cultural roots after encountering the wisdom of the Non-Indian Traditions. Sri Aurobindo has got no philosophy if by it we mean academic philosophy with theories and counter theories. But his massive structure of metaphysics is only an insight into reality. His own words flow thus : " I had only to write down in terms of intellect all that I had observed and come to know in practising Yoga daily, and philosophy was there automatically. But that is not being a philosopher."¹ In his magnum opus ' The Life Divine ' we come across his metaphysical riches wherein he aptly reconciles the traditional philosophical thoughts of India as Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita into his ' Integral Non-dualism ' (Purnādvaita).² Not only this, in his

1. From a letter to Dilip Kumar Ray quoted by R.R. Diwakar : Mahāyogi Sri Aurobindo , (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1962)

2. Advaitavāda emphasises upon the Supreme reality, as it says Brahman alone is real. On the other hand, Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda

' Integral Non-dualism ' he also reconciles the chief currents of Indian spiritualism with dominant streams of Western culture by the magic of his creative vision into the exquisitely elegant texture of harmony. This philosophy represents a marvellous synthesis of the East and the West - which permits the logic of the Infinite and the logic of finitude appear side by side. Contrary to the idea of creation (as traditionally conceived), Sri Aurobindo speaks of the theory of evolution which is ' the pivot ' around which all his metaphysical creeds revolve and this theory of evolution has a few unique characteristics which radically differentiates it from the so-called varieties of evolutionary theories. His view on māyā appears only in connection with his theory of evolution which is required to maintain integral non-dualistic view of reality without ignoring the world we see around us.

Sri Aurobindo introduced the Integral non-dualism which he designated the ' real monism ', the true Advaita ' as contrasted with the illusionism of Advaita Vedānta of ^{the} Saṅkarite school. Aurobindo tries to synthesis three seeming contradictory interpretations of vedānta - the Nirguna Brahman of Advaita, the Saguna Brahman of Viśiṣṭāvaita, and the jīvātman of Dvaita. Integralism maintains

emphasises upon the sovereign reality of Divine personality who is attributed by all auspicious qualities, and Dvaitavāda insists upon the distinct reality of individual selves and the one Supreme Lord to whom they attribute love and devotion.

that these three - supra-cosmic, transcendent, cosmic universality are equally real. In his philosophy the cosmic and the individual are as eternally real as supra-cosmic transcendent. Individual may be less fundamental than that of the universal transcendent, but this does not prove its non-reality or the universal may be less fundamental, but not less real than the Transcendent. The pure transcendence who possesses a higher poise of being synthesises the cosmic manifold. The world-process can not be false or void. There exists an integral Reality between the Absolute and the world and individual. Sri Aurobindo develops a vision of integral Reality in which the Nirguna Brahman and the world are perceived in the unity of self-evolving and self-revealing Absolute and thus his philosophy is known as ' Integral Non-dualism '.

But a proper appreciation of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Non-dualism will remain incomplete unless we mention a few lines about his handling of the term philosophy. By the term philosophy, Sri Aurobindo does not mean a hard intellectual enterprise or a fascinating frivolity of thought. For him philosophy is an integral view of life. As human life is a multidimensional unity it is to be viewed as a whole and for this reason, philosophy should move for integration and unity of experience.³ Neither barren intellectualism nor extreme existential outlook has any place in his Integral

3. By experience , Sri Aurobindo does not mean sensuous experience only. For him, the standpoint of philosophy must be all-inclusive and harmonious and truth must be 'non-one-sided.'

Non-dualism. In his own words, "Philosophy dealing with the principles of things must come to perceive the Principle of all these principles and investigate its nature, attributes and essential workings".⁴ Philosophy, for Sri Aurobindo, although is not capable of securing spiritual realisation, it is an indispensable aid to such realisation. K. D. Sethna thus summarises Sri Aurobindo's conception of philosophy in the following words : " His (Sri Aurobindo's) philosophy is not abstract logic-spinning from a few principles of thought mixed with a few data of ordinary observation. It is only the intellectual elucidation of systematisation of concrete and direct experience of realities lying beyond the mere mind; it is but a mental picture of what is reached by the inmost consciousness in its Yogic penetration of the subliminal and supraliminal".⁵ In view of the above , any discussion regarding Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of philosophical concepts like māyā must be done in that perspective.

II. The Nature of Reality :

The thought of Sri Aurobindo is in tune with ^{the} Vedic and Upaniṣadic thinking. Following the upaniṣadic statement " O Brahman, thou art this, old man and boy and girl, this bird, this insect",⁶

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4. Arya : The Synthesis of Yoga , Vol. IV , 1917-18 , pp. 269-71, included in the compilation Sri Aurobindo on Social Sciences and Humanities , (ed. K.L. Motwani, Orient Longmans, 1962.)
5. The Indian Spirit and The World's Future , (Pondichery, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1953,) pp. 165-66.
6. The Life Divine, (Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1990)p.324.

Sri Aurobindo advocates a monistic view point affirming that " the Absolute, the self, the Divine, the Spirit, the Being is one ".⁷

Sri Aurobindo conceives the Absolute Reality as the triune principle - Saccidānanda , that is , Existence, Consciousness Force, Bliss.⁸ To him the world is bliss. In his own words , " Delight is existence, Delight is the secret of creation, Delight is the root of birth, Delight is the cause of remaining in existence, Delight is the end of birth and that into which creation ceases," the finite is the manifestation of the infinite, the One.⁹ The one becomes many but in becoming the many it always remains the one. Aurobindo emphasises that we see an infinitely fundamental oneness in the very principle of Nature . The basic Force is one, the substance is one, the mind is one, life is one, humanity is one in nature, but all of them differentiate themselves into many, as the

7. Ibid , p. 335.

8. The Absolute of Sri Aurobindo is not the same as the concept of Absolute in the Hegalian thought. The Absolute of Hegel is ' self-distinguishing and self-objectifying principle of self-consciousness.' For Hegel the world is a form of self-externalisation of the Absolute. Thought moves dialectically. As logic follows the principle in the development of thought, so that the world follows the same principles in its evolution. For Hegel Reality is thought. But this ' thought ' does not change its character. It is essentially relative and cannot give the Absolute. For Sri Aurobindo the Absolute is integrally conceived. It is at once static and dynamic - transcendent and immanent, impersonal and personal.

9. The Life Divine , (Op. Cit) p. 101.

substance develops many substances ; mind becomes many mental states-thoughts, perceptions which are of different nature, yet it maintains harmony ; life expresses innumerable lives which are different in race and types. These inexhaustible diversity is the play of the Oneness, the Infinite, the Absolute Reality. The diversity and the unity, the many and the one, the finite and the infinite are inter-related, they co-exist. The Supreme Reality manifests Itself as infinite as well as finite, as many as well as one, as determinate as well as indeterminate, as nirguna as well as saguna.

Sri Aurobindo looks the world as a " free creative act on the part of the Absolute Spirit ". The act is eternal, it is the power of the Absolute. It is the Absolute's delight of mutable becoming or variable self manifestation. The Absolute Reality or Brahman is identical with our inmost self. It is ineffable, Pure existence without quality, quantity and form. The Absolute is in its essence indeterminable and inconceivable by finite and defining mind. It cannot be described either by negations neti neti as we cannot limit it by saying ' it is not this ', 'not that ' or by affirming iti, iti. The Divine Being , according to Sri Aurobindo , is form and formless as well. The indeterminable determines itself as both infinite and finite. Brahman or the Absolute manifests itself through the world process. There is no contradiction to be at once form and formless. The contradiction lies only when we try to understand the Absolute in terms of our logical thinking. To our finite reason it is magic, the supreme truth eludes the analysis of man's logic, it postulates a logic of its own, it is a logic of the Infinite. The logic of Infinite, Sri Aurobindo observes, comprehends

all the data and relations which our finite mind as the instrument of an ignorance with its very limited vision cannot grasp. Our finite reason concludes that there is no diversity in oneness and determination in indeterminate. But from the viewpoint of infinite logic the difficulties do not arise, the logic of infinite is the logic of the universal being of Brahman and the infinite intelligence of Māyā. The logic of infinite is not mental or intellectual. It is a spiritual and supra-mental reason. It is a greater reason. It is more vast, subtle, complex in its operation. In order to understand it, we have to grasp certain fundamental powers or potentialities of the Infinite Reality.

The Supreme reveals in three forms - Self-conscious Being, Spirit and God or the Divine Being. In Indian terms we may say Ātman, Puruṣa, Īśvara. Similar is the case of self-awareness or force of consciousness. Consciousness-Force appears to us in three forms - Māyā, which is the force of consciousness conceptually creator of all things, 'Prakṛti', Nature or Force which dynamically execute, working out all things under the supervision of the Conscious Being and finally, Śakti which is both conceptively creative and dynamically executive of all the divine workings. The whole existence is comprised of these three forms - Māyā, Prakṛti and Śakti, and if Nature is viewed as an integral whole, all apparent antinomies, disparateness and incompatibility that seem to exist between the Infinite and the finite, the Transcendent and the immanent, the Supra-cosmic and the cosmic would be synthesised.

For Integralism Ātman, Puruṣa and Īśvara are not mutually exclusive truths, they are fundamental spiritual determinations of the one Supreme Spirit whom Sri Aurobindo calls Parābrahman or

Puruṣaottama. They correspond to different levels of spiritual realization and call for different lines of philosophical approach.

For Sri Aurobindo the creation is the manifestation of that Puruṣaottama. The manifested world with all its badness and good, pleasure and pain is as real as He. They are distorted reflections or the inalienable self delight of the Real from a lower plane. Matter, life, and consciousness are different aspects of manifestation of the Supreme Reality who is unfolding Himself in the process of the universe. The key concept of this unfoldingness is the theory of evolution which is novel and unique in many respects. However, although Sri Aurobindo's prime concern is to explain the origination of mind out of matter, yet he is not satisfied with the evolutionist philosophies of the West. According to Sri Aurobindo, the so-called evolutionist philosophies of the West only acquaint us with the 'howness' of evolutionary process but, cannot aware us about the 'whyness' of it. In other words, the Western theories of evolution can not explain why mind evolved out of matter at all. The nisus from matter to mind or spirit can be explained only if there is in the very being of matter something to which the nisus belongs as its very nature.

It is interesting to note in the passing that Sri Aurobindo in particular and other contemporary Indian Philosophers in general make a realistic approach and successfully managed to refute the charge levelled by certain critics against Indian Philosophy that it is 'life-negating' and 'other-worldly.' The main approach of modern philosophy is, so to say, based upon the philosophy of evolution. Hence to appreciate the real intention of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the philosophical concepts like māyā, one must

acquaint oneself at the outset , at least in short, with Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution. Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution which is again the cornerstone of his metaphysics is primarily concerned with the ' future evolution of man ' upon earth. And the chief characteristic feature of his theory of evolution is that divine life is to be realised on earth itself. For this, he contended that the process of evolution must be preceded by the process of involution.

III. The Theory of Evolution :

Science proposes the theory of evolution that life developed out of matter, which in its turn evolved into consciousness. By a stroke of Sri Aurobindo the scientific interpretation reaches further shape of future. If matter has developed into mind then mental consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are beyond mind. The history of evolution indicates that the preceding element has been transfigured in the next dominant principle . The evolution is the gradual self-manifestation of the Supreme Divine Being. To enlarge its self-existence, to have the delight of coming into manifestation the Conscious Force, the Reality continues the evolutionary process. Sri Aurobindo also gives a philosophical interpretation of the theory of evolution which the western idea of evolution fails to give.¹⁰ The Western idea of evo-

10. In the view of Aristotle evolution is the gradual transformation of the potential into the actual. Anaxagoras solved it by postulating the existence of the Soul or Nous which being not of the nature of material objects, could impart motion to them. Parmenides thinks that there is no creation at all, but is one immovable eternal Being. In the philosophy of

lution is limited to the physical and bio-logical data of nature but it is blind to the explanation of our being. It gives us a complete scheme and institution of the physical method but remains silent regarding the miracle each step involves. It cannot explain adequately how mental consciousness could come into being from physical stuff ? The modern scientists explain the ' howness ' of evolution, but they fail to give answer the ' whyness ' of it. Sri Aurobindo realises that we are bound to suppose that consciousness force or spirit must be involved from the beginning in the whole of matter, life, mind and all are latent, inactive or concealed active powers in all the progression of material, energy. Unless we assume this previous involution we cannot justify explain the evolutionary process at all.

Sri Aurobindo points out that the preceding element has been transfigured in the subsequent dominant principle, life evolves from matter simply because matter is a ' form of veiled life '. Therefore, evolution does not produce anything new, rather it unveils what was already there. The Principle of evolution is manifestation, manifestation of the Divine who is unfolding himself in this universe. Sri Aurobindo's theory of terrestrial evolution as the gradual self-manifestation of the Supreme Divine Being in material conditions has its root in the Upaniṣadic teachings of the essential identity of all existents.¹¹ He views the

Plato creation is not a material but is mainly ideal and intellectual. The Ideal of creation is prior to creation. God has not the power without getting the pattern from Ideas.

11. The opening line of Īsopaniṣad ' Īśā vāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ ' has been interpreted in three ways - " to be clothed ", " to be worked as a garment " and " to be inhabited ". Sri Aurobindo

entire evolutionary process from a spiritual perspective and it is spiritual evolution because , according to this, the spirit is hidden in the world order and it is an evolution guided by the spirit. The movement from spirit to matter and matter to spirit belongs to the very nature of Brahman, the Absolute ; it is Māyā , the power of the Absolute. If Spirit is conscious and Māyā is unconscious then both the Conscious and the unconscious are not separate from each other, but belong to each other. The movement of ' descend ' and ' ascent ' constitute a circular movement and man belongs to a stage in this cyclic order.

The originality of Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution lies in two factors which have sparked off the infinitive flash in his thought. First factor is the complementary principle of involution, according to which nothing evolves which was not previously involved. Unless we assume this previous involution we cannot justly explain the evolutionary process at all. The process of evolution is the movement of involution. It is a creation not out of something which never was but which was implicit in the Being. In evolution the new principle brings about a total change transforming the lower principle .¹² Evolution without involution is unbelievable. The evolution of matters is possible because there is the

emphasis on the last one.

- See G.G. Mukhopadhyaya : Studies in the Upaniṣads (Op. Cit)
p. 44.

12. Bradley thinks that in the process of evolution the new principle comes upon the suicide of the lower principles. In Alexander's conception of emergent evolution, there is no change of the old principles in addition to a new one, only it joins them. Both of them fundamentally differ from Aurobindo's conception of evolution.

involution of the spirit into matter previously. " Evolution is thus the home-coming or return journey of the spirit.¹³ Sri Aurobindo admits the theory of Sāṃkhya's Satkāryavāda in a certain extent, where it says the effect conceals in the cause before its creation ; but he disagrees with the Sāṃkhya's evolutionary process that from an unconscious prakṛti the cosmic universe is gradually evolved. Sri Aurobindo realises through his integral yoga that the world does not evolve of itself in a continuous process without an intervention of the Divine Consciousness. For Sri Aurobindo, however, evolution does not mean merely addition of some new principles to those which are already existent, but it means the manifestation of the Divine consciousness. In Sri Aurobindo's thought " evolution " is the unravelling, the gradual disclosure and deliverance of the Spirit, the ascension and revelation of the involved consciousness through a series of awakenings - matter awakening into life, life awakening into mind and mind now seeking to awaken into something beyond the mind, into a power of conscious Spirit."¹⁴

Evolution, therefore, is the movement which is the reverse of the movement of involution. It is a sort of home-sickness of the Spirit . From this infinitive flash the second factor follows that if matter has developed into mind, it may be said that mental

13. R.K. Acharjee : Sri Aurobindo & Prof. Alexander : Their theories of evolution , Mother India, June, 1980.

14. Nalinikanta Gupta : The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo , Part I, pp.31-32 (as quoted by V.M. Reddy in his book Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Evolution , Institute of Human Study, Hyderabad, 1966,p.3)

consciousness may itself be only a form and veil of higher states which are beyond mind. As the Spirit in creation has involved itself in matter, life and mind, therefore, the matter, life and mind feel an urge to come back to their source. So the evolutionary process can not stop with mind, mind is not its last word. The future evolution of man is going on towards something transcending himself, the Superman. It leases itself upon the idea that the source of evolution is the Divine Reality, therefore the process can not stop until the goal is reached i.e., the whole world is completely divinised. When this stage will come into existence there will be a total transformation of the whole world. But this higher stage does not mean any severance from our body, life, soul or mind, but a complete transformation of them where higher qualities of goodness, beauty, love, bliss, divine strength etc. co-exist altogether. So the final result of the revelatory creation - is the Supreme manifestation of the Existence, Consciousness, Delight - Saccidānanda.

IV. The Status of The World :

The phenomenal world is the self-manifestation of the pure Being. It is a " free creative act on the part of the Absolute Spirit - an act which is eternal, which express^{es} the mystically latent power of self-determination (śakti) of the Absolute, and which symbolizes the Absolute's delight of mutable becoming or variable self manifestation."¹⁵ For Sri Aurobindo the world is a ' līlā ', the play, the child's joy, the poets' joy. The

15. Haridas Choudhury - The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1960) p. 107.

The Supreme Reality is manifesting itself through its creation. If the creation is somehow or other attached to Brahman, it can never be unreal. The Supreme Reality is manifesting itself in a reality of infinite forms and powers, enjoys itself through its creation. Creation would be a self-manifestation, it would be an ordered deploying of the infinite possibilities of the Infinite. The world is not essential truth of Absolute but phenomenal truth of its free multiplicity and infinite superficial mutability and not truth of its fundamental and immutable unity.

If this world expresses a great creative motive if it is a manifestation of a divine life into the finite life, then Sri Aurobindo says that māyā in the sense of cosmic illusion becomes meaningless, a mere phantasy. He does not want to deny joy and pain, struggle and effort of human life like a Buddhist and māyāvādīn, but takes them as real as Brahman. According to Sri Aurobindo, " All the stress of struggle and effort, success and failure, joy and suffering the mixture of ignorance and knowledge would be the experience needed for the soul, mind, life and physical part to grow into the full light of a spiritual perfected being."¹⁶ Sri Aurobindo firmly believes that the world expresses a foreseen truth, obeys a predetermining will, realises an original formative self-vision.

Sri Aurobindo critically examines the views of Buddha and Śaṅkara with regard to the status of the world. Sri Aurobindo agrees with Śaṅkara to the point that Brahman being ultimate Reality is eternally perfect in itself and beyond all multiplicity. But he rejects Śaṅkara's view that the universe is mere illusion.

16. The Life Divine (Op. Cit.) p. 418.

Sri Aurobindo points out that the analogy of dream life given by the illusionists to explain the world experience as false, fails to establish the falsity of the universe. According to him, the events of dream is no longer be a mere unreal objects as they are all only a transcript of reality, a system of symbol-images and our awaking experience of the universe is similarly not real but only a transcript of reality. In other words, our awaking experiences are series of collection of symbol-images. But in the theory of illusion the only reality is an indeterminable featureless pure existence, Brahman, who can not be rendered by a transcript, a crowd of symbols or images. Again, when it is said that dream is felt to be unreal because it ceases and has no further validity when we pass from one states of consciousness to our normal state, the reason is not much sound, because we know that there are different states of consciousness, each has its own realities. But when state of consciousness fades back as soon as we pass into another state, it would not prove the reality of the state in which we exist now and the unreality of the other which we have left behind us. It is equally possible to regard them as three different orders of one Reality.

In the same way, Sri Aurobindo rejects the analogy of hallucination. We may divide hallucination into two aspects- mental and visual. When we see an image of things where they do not exist, it is called visual hallucination, as we see the mirage, and when we see a snake in the state of a rope, it would be an example of mental illusion. Sri Aurobindo explains that in each case either it is visual or mental, the illusion is not an image of something quite non-existent, but an image of something which exists elsewhere,

here it has been imposed by the mind's error or by a sense-error. Hence Sri Aurobindo proclaims " The analogy therefore is unhelpful ; it would be valid only if our image of the universe were a falsity reflecting a true universe which is not here but elsewhere, or else if it were a false imaged manifestation of the Reality replacing in the mind or covering with its distorted resemblance a true manifestation."¹⁷ The one manifests itself into a reality of numberless forms and powers. Sri Aurobindo admits that there is no doubt that the process of such manifestation is a mystery, he also says it magic ; but altogether he denies to explain it as a magic of the unreal. All mental errors and illusion are only a wrong perception of realities, a wrong relation which is the result of the ignorance. But the cosmic illusion is not of such nature ; it imposes names, figures, happenings that are pure invention on a Reality in which there never were or never will be any happenings, names or figures.

Our mind, the parent of these illusions is a seeker and discoverer or a creator of truths, possibilities and actualities but it is limited in knowledge. The Original consciousness, from which mind must be a derivation, on the contrary, is not limited like mind, it is cosmic in its scope. It is free from all ignorance, it opens no error.

In view of the fore-going discussion it is evident that Sri Aurobindo never takes the world as unreal. Regarding the status of the world his view is opposed to the ' world negation theory.'¹⁸ He

17. Ibid. P. 430.

18. It is to be noted here that some philosophers consider the status

firmly believes that the Supreme Reality manifesting itself in a reality of numberless forms and powers of its being enjoys itself through its creation. He discards the view of illusionists. He says, " the Brahman, the Supreme Reality, is That which being known, all is known ; but in the illusionist solution it is That, which being known, all becomes unreal and incomprehensible mystery."¹⁹ The cosmic universe , for Sri Aurobindo, is real, not illusion. The eternal static and the eternal dynamic are both true of the Reality, the immobile and the mobile Brahman are both the same Reality.

V. Māyā and Supermind :

Brahman being one becomes the many of the manifestation. He is the transcendent, the cosmic and the multiple. The homogeneous Existence is transformed by the Consciousness-Force into the manifestation for self-delight. This Consciousness-Force which measures out the names and shapes according to the Absolute Being has been called Māyā . In ^{the} Vedas it is said Rta-Cit. In the words of Sri Aurobindo " This power was known to the Vedic seers by the name of Māyā. Māyā meant for them the power of infinite consciousness to comprehend, contain in itself and measure out, that is to say, to form - for form is delimitation - Name and Shape out of the vast illimitable Truth of infinite existence."²⁰ Sri Aurobindo calls this power as

of the world as illusory , as dream or hallucination. The world, for them is only an appearance and therefore should not be taken as real. In other words, it is māyā in the sense of something artificial. It seems to be real but not actually real. Such a view is called by Sri Aurobindo, ' the world negation theory.'

19. The Life Divine , (Op. Cit.) p. 470

20. Ibid., p. 115.

' Higher Māyā ' or ' Divine Māyā '. It is a self determining power, a capacity of manifestation of Supreme Spirit in many. " It is by Māyā that static truth of essential being becomes ordered of active being ." ²¹ The creation is in no way māyā in the traditional sense of illusion but māyā as the Absolute's power of self expression of the many without losing oneness. On the other hand, the lower or mental māyā conceals the play of static truth to us and being persuaded by it the individual believes that ' he is in all ', but not ' all in him ' - and inseparated from the one. Sri Aurobindo affirms that the distinction between the higher māyā and the lower māyā has been neglected by the illusionist and they wrongly interpreted that the mental māyā is the creator of the world which is an inexplicable paradox - and which would be classified neither real nor unreal. He criticises them very strongly and says that a theory of māyā in the sense of illusion created more difficulties instead of solving the problems of our existence. He puts the question to them that if all cosmic experiences are illusions, then what guarantee is there that spiritual experiences are not illusion or māyā ? The illusionists make god and ourselves only myths of māyā , for god is only a reflection of Brahman in māyā and ourselves are only a reflection of Brahman in illusory individuality.

At any rate, the problem of māyā was handled by Sri Aurobindo in a more lucid and less sophisticated manner in his notebook which is included in ' The Hour of God ' , a posthumously published prose writings of Sri Aurobindo. ²² Here Sri Aurobindo considers the world

21. Ibid.

22. The Hour of God, (Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 4th Edition, 2nd Impression , 1986) p. 63.

as the symbol of Brahman. In other words, the world symbolises the Reality. Our assignment of false values to things, of names and forms that symbolises the essential reality is the creation of the mind. And this is verily described by the term 'cosmic illusion'. Sri Aurobindo categorically describes it as 'the mistake of the mind and sense'. It is a mistake, because if it were accepted, we would be compelled to accept the entire universal existence in the sense of an illusion or māyā. To put it otherwise, being devoid of the nature of an unchanging transcendental and final reality of things, what it represents is only a symbolical reality, that is to say, in terms of cosmic consciousness it is an assignment of conventional values to the reality of Brahman. What we know either by our senses or by our discursive reasoning as objectively existing are, in fact forms of consciousness. On account of the movement of consciousness, the Reality turned first into terms and ideas, and then in consciousness itself they are objectivised and thus they 'have a fixed conventional reality'. According to Sri Aurobindo, the Existence which is otherwise said Reality or Brahman has two basic states of consciousness - cosmic and transcendental; the former stands for the reality of the world as a 'direct first term expressing the inexpressible', the latter for the reality of the world as 'only a secondary and indirect term expressing the inexpressible'. Again, due to the cosmic consciousness, we are aware of the world as the manifestations of our selves. and in transcendental consciousness we are aware of the world as 'the manifestation of something I choose to be to my Self-consciousness'. Here one can have the freedom to express oneself otherwise. But whatever be the

case , in different symbolic or linguistic expressions , it does not affect or make any difference in what is real. For Sri Aurobindo, Brahman, the reality and the world, the symbols of Reality with their fixed conventional values are integrally connected. Matter, Mind and Life are regarded as ' general symbols with a fixed general value to God in His cosmic consciousness '. But so far as their individual valuation is concerned, they express themselves differently. Nevertheless, when we say that the world is a creation of supreme Cosmic Illusion (Parā Māyā) , according to Sri Aurobindo, we only intend to mean the perception of the purely conventional value of form and name in the universe. The world in this sense has no unchanging transcendental and final reality.

But this by no means construe the sense that the world is unreal or a ' stupendous zero '. Sri Aurobindo warns us about the dangerous consequences of such a too simplicistic interpretation. In his own words, " we must remember that all these terms, Māyā, illusion, dream, unreality, relative reality, conventional value, are merely verbal figures and must scholastic or logical insistence. They are like the paintbrush hurled by the painter at his picture in desperation at not arriving at the effect he wanted , they are stones thrown at the truth, not the truth itself ." ²³ Sri Aurobindo is of the opinion that some renowned metaphysicians ignored the role of words as carrying only conventional values and are symbols of a truth, which is in itself inexpressible in their philosophical enterprise and consequently condemned the reality of the world. In other-words, they deny the reality of all mundane existence, both nature and super-nature , man and God as myths of a cosmic dream.

23. Ibid , p. 64.

There are three different grades of spiritual awareness that may arise in treating Sri Aurobindo's conception of Māyā . The highest spiritual awareness in this gradation , as we have already stated shortly, is the awareness of the Brahman as Supreme Reality and the world is only the bearer of the conventional symbols of the Reality. No one can raise doubt with regard to this, because if one were not agreed to admit the purity of the highest soul-experience, it would vitiate one's all other perceptions including the testimony of our senses. With a view to maintaining a hierarchy of spiritual development (which is said to be a corollary of Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution), Sri Aurobindo admits the role of lower (Aparā) māyā . This aparā māyā , for Sri Aurobindo, is the awareness of ' the system of false values put by mind and sense on the symbol-facts of the universe. It is our mind that imposes some false valuation to the world we see or feel around us. In the Gītā this false valuation is verily described as māyā . However, it is indeed true that our senses very often mislead us ; we perceive a snake instead of a rope. All our judgments or opinions are mental constructions and our mental constructions often function through the categories of being and non-being . For this reason what we know , we know conditionally and all our judgments, though serve the purpose of day-to-day practical needs due to the values assigned by mind, are in fact involve dubitability and partiality. Perhaps seeing this, as Sri Aurobindo thinks, some metaphysicians denied the reality of the world altogether. But an intensive look into the spiritual development, for Sri Aurobindo, would convince us that it is only a case of overmind ; a stage of 'involution' in the scale of consciousness, from the Supreme to overmind through Supermind. Supermind, as we shall see lateron, is the Self-Determining - Infinite

Consciousness. When from supermind truth comes down to the level of overmind all the separative forces which are in conflict as well as in co-operation with each other become operative. In Sri Aurobindo's own words " Each overmental being has his own world, each force has its own play and throws itself out to realise its own fulfilment in the cosmic play. All is possible ; and from this separative seat of conflicting and even mutually negating possibilities comes too, as soon as mind , life and matter are thrown out into play, the possibility of ignorance, unconsciousness, falsehood, death and suffering."²⁴ This is the stage of māyā . Not only to speak of spiritual culture , even in case of moral culture, the values which we assign to things at a certain stage appear to be irrelevant at some other developed stage. We usually put moral values with regard to our emotions, passions and aspirations on actions and experiences. But when these conditions are changed, the so-called conventional values become false and from false valuation, dissatisfaction with life, becomes evident. This stage is sometimes described by the word ' Vairāgya ' . It has for Sri Aurobindo, three types of varieties - mental, moral and spiritual. The last and the most powerful of this is called ' spiritual vairāgya ' where we know the world as a system of mere consciousness values in ' Parabrahman ' . Sri Aurobindo inferred that perhaps at this level of spiritual culture some metaphysicians like Śaṅkara, deny to assign any ultimate status to worldly existence.²⁵ It is indeed true that from the standpoint of ' Pure Being ', the world appears to be unreal.

24. Ibid , p. 84.

25. Sri Aurobindo summarises Śaṅkara's philosophy the following sentences : " In the Philosophy of Shakara one feels the

But what Sri Aurobindo says that all these are possible in the stage of overmind. But overmind is not the final stage in evolutionary process. Since evolution pre-supposes involution of the Supreme Reality or Brahman , it cannot stop its journey until the Highest One is realized. Since māyā is overmind, only a stage in evolutionary journey, it cannot be condemned as a mere ' illusion ' or ' mirage ' or ' dream ' - a toto-unreality. Each and every step of evolutionary movement from the lowest to the Highest is necessary and sufficient for the integral view of Reality. They are necessary because minus any of them, the reality cannot be the Supreme ; sufficient because with them, no other would be required . That is to say, nothing can exist beyond the scope of the Absolute. When we perceive variation in valuation of worldly things, it (the change) does not touch the thing-in-itself, rather it only modifies our mental assignment of values - names and forms from certain standpoints. Sri Aurobindo understood Śāṅkara's philosophy of the world in accordance with his own integral vedānta based on Yogic experience. He

presence of a conflict, an opposition which this powerful intellect has stated with full force and masterfully arranged rather than solved with any finality - the conflict of an intuition intensely aware of an absolute transcendent and inmost Reality and a strong reason regarding the world with a keen and vigorous rational intelligence The reason has to affirm the reality of the phenomenal existence but it is not itself that Reality and when we pass beyond the phenomenon to the Real, it still exists but is no longer valid to our consciousness, it is therefore unreal."

- The Life Divine , Vol. II (Op. Cit.) p. 253.

expresses his views in the following words : " For at a certain stage of spiritual culture we come to the perception of the world as a system of mere consciousness-values in Parabrahman or to a middle term, the experience, which was probably the decisive factor in the minds of great spiritual seekers like Shakara, of the pure and bright impersonal Sachchidānanda beyond, unaffected by and apparently remote from all cosmic existence. Observing intellectually through the mind this great experience, the conclusion is natural and almost inevitable that this Pure and Bright One regards the universe as a mirage, unreality, a dream. But these are only the terms the world-values and conventional idea-values into which mind then translates this fact of unaffected transcendence ; and it so translates it because these are terms it is itself accustomed to apply to anything which is beyond it, remote from it, not practically affecting it in tangible relations." ²⁶

Sri Aurobindo considers the involution of the supreme Spirit in Matter which is inconscient is the cause of the world that appears before our vision. And again from Matter to the Superconscient Spirit, there is the possibility of evolutionary movement. This in turn enables us to infer that evolution will not stop with man and the superman will come as the next approaching achievement in the evolution on the earth. For Sri Aurobindo, man has the mind which is circumscribed in a precarious and imperfect conscious body. But the superman will be the supramental spirit which will be able to use the conscious body freely. In his own words, " The difference between man and superman will be the difference between mind and a consciousness as far beyond it as thinking mind is beyond the consciousness

26. The Hour of God , (Pondicherry , Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1986) pp. 67-68.

of plant and animal ; the differentiating essence of man is mind, the differentiating essence of superman will be supermind or a divine gnosis."²⁷

But Sri Aurobindo's conception of Superman is closely connected with his analysis of Super-Mind or the Universal Mind.

The following tables will show the scale of consciousness at a glance.²⁸

Table 1.

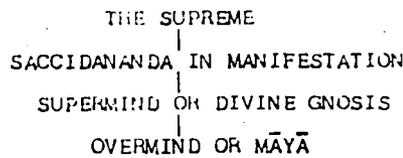
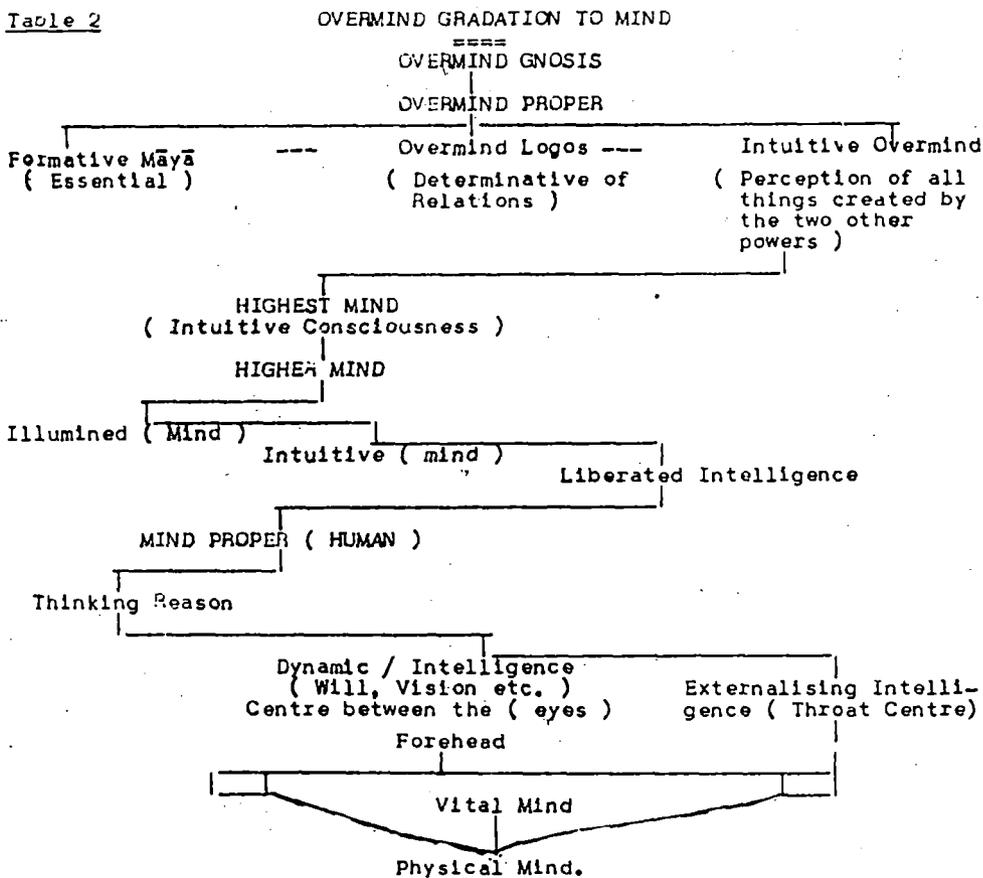


Table 2



27. Ibid , p.91

28. Ibid , pp. 84-86.

Some idealistic philosophers recognise mind as the creator of the universe, but Sri Aurobindo thinks that such a mind as we know may not be adequate to explain the phenomenal world. If the world is the creation of mind, it leaves the Absolute untouched and the whole universe becomes phenomenal which according to Sri Aurobindo is neither the implication nor the meaning of the Upanisadic statement " All is Brahman " - " Sarvaṁ Khalvidam Brahmaḥ ". Our mind cannot work from the undivided vision of truth, it creates division, labour, grasping half light and half darkness - the result of which is contradictions and antinomies. So the world is not a figment of conception in the Universal Mind, but a conscious birth of that which is beyond Mind into forms of itself."²⁹ The Supermind or the Divine māyā is the creator . The fact of becoming presupposes the principle of māyā or supermind. Here the supra-cosmic and cosmic manifold are unified and it is the uninterrupted continuity of the creative process.

In supermind knowledge and will are not divided like mind, but one. Mind is not the creatrix, if it were so then all would have been illusion, the becoming would be the unreal or ' mithyā '. Mind is in separative consciousness. The supermind works from all comprehending, all beholding, total vision of truth. The ground of manifestation is in supermind, but not in mind. The Supermind is a principle of active will and knowledge, it is that integral consciousness in which self-awareness and self-limitation are united. By idea it develops the triune principle of existence, consciousness and bliss out of their indivisible unity, it differentiates their principles but does not

29. The Life Divine , (Op. Cit.) p. 117.

divide. It is Real idea, it is the vast. It contains all multiplicity but it starts from unity, not division, comprehension is its primary act while differentiation is secondary. It is that integral knowledge where there is no independent centre of existence, no individual separate ego such as we see in ourselves. Though each individual self is a unique focus and dynamic centre of the Supreme spirit, but still it does not arrogate to itself any separate insular existence. Through his integral yoga Sri Aurobindo arrived at an affirmation of the supermind as creator in " which all is one in being, consciousness, will and delight, yet with an infinite capacity of differentiation that deploys but does not destroy unity - in which Truth is the substance and Truth rises in the Idea and Truth comes out in the form and there is one truth of knowledge and will, one truth of self fulfilment and therefore of delight ; for all self-fulfilment is satisfaction of being."³⁰

The essential delight is the motive of extension or becoming of the transcendent saccidānanda which is the self-concentrated unity in timeless eternity and space-less unity. The Supermind being the motive force or delight can be viewed in three poises.

The first state is the self-extended state of ' Saccidānanda ' without individualisation or self-formation. There does not develop any separate ego, there is only pure unalloyed oneness.

In the second poise of supermind we get the difference, with an awareness of the unity. In this state the difference is dominating by the comprehending consciousness and the soul-formation is developed, the clear self-consciousness emerges at their poise, still the One is there.

30. Ibid , p. 131.

In the third poise the comprehending consciousness is removed the multiplication is the main fact. But the multiplication is not a feature of Avidyā or ignorance but it has a practical import for the sake of play. In the supramental level of truth we have a dualism tinged with the light of unity. " A necessary consequence of the theory of Supermind is that it resolved the conflicting views of spiritual experiences of the liberated soul propagated by the three mutually conflicting theories of the Kevalādvaita , the Viśiṣṭādvaita and the Dvaita " ³¹

VI. Knowledge & Ignorance :

For a comprehensive study of Sri Aurobindo's concept of māyā, it is imperative to explain the concept of avidyā as dealt by Sri Aurobindo. Because his view on avidyā is co-related with the concept of māyā . According to Sri Aurobindo, the long-established view of unreal cosmic māyā can not be abolished unless we find out the true nature of ignorance and its relation to knowledge. In his philosophy avidyā, too, has been considered as a power of manifolding of the One. Most of the Indian Philosophical Schools have discussed this problem standing on their own diases. But almost all of them agree in believing that avidyā is opposite to vidyā , and it is the cause of our bondage and suffering. In our common sense view too, ignorance and

31. S.J. Chakravorty : The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo , (New Delhi, Sterling Publishers , 1991) p. 36.

It is to be noted here that according to Śaṅkara's Non-qualified Monism, the liberated soul is in the state of unitary consciousness of ' All-One ' , where no multiplicity is realised. According to the Qualified Monism of Rāmānuja, the liberated cannot be

knowledge belong to contradictory realms. Ignorance, as it is believed from popular linguistic usage is the absence of awareness or knowledge. When I say ' I do not know ', I am ignorant, and when I say ' I am ignorant ', it means - ' I do not know ' . In other words , ignorance is Jñānābhāva - the absence of knowledge or awareness. In the traditional Śāṅkarite as well as Rāmānujists ' approach, we come across the interpretations from different intellectual points of view. In Advaita our direct apprehension of ignorance is not of the absence of knowledge, but of a thing which is positive but uncertain. In Rāmānuja's thought avidyā has been considered as the negation of vidyā which is natural to jīva . But in the hands of Sri Aurobindo avidyā becomes a power indistinguishably associated with vidyā. In his view, knowledge and ignorance are not opposite to each other, but are fundamentally similar in nature. He feels that the integral character of knowledge will be affected in admission of avidyā as jñānavirodhī . It may turn into a wrong conception of things due to its limitation, but it is basically similar in nature to knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo points out that ignorance is a kind of knowledge. All our empirical knowledge is incomplete from the standpoint of the knowledge of the Absolute which is the only complete knowledge. Therefore, the very concept of knowledge is nothing but the concept of degree. And from this point of view ignorance implies a kind of knowledge. What appears to be knowledge from a lower point of view is appeared as ignorance from a higher point of view. That shows that knowledge and ignorance are similar in nature.

identical with Brahman but similar to Brahman, means it is Brahman as inseparable. For the Dvaitavādin, in the state of liberation, the soul recognises itself as distinct and separate from Brahman and the multiplicity is real to him.

Knowledge and ignorance are similar in nature because both are conceived as a power of the One Divine consciousness. They two co-exist in the universe and diversely operate the process of the universe ; both are two independent powers of consciousness.

The similarity of knowledge and ignorance may be conceived from the transformation of the ignorance into the knowledge. In the evolutionary process the knowledge emerges out of the ignorance. Ignorance is nothing but a potency of knowledge. It is a limitation of knowledge which creates the possibility of error. But it is a purposefull plunge of the Absolute for its cosmic existence.

Sri Aurobindo points out that in ^{The} Rgveda knowledge appears to signify a consciousness of the Truth, and ignorance means an unconsciousness, acitti of the Truth. In later period the Vedānta makes a distinction between knowledge and ignorance by highlighting the antinomy of vidyā and avidyā . This distinction had to go to its logical extreme where vidyā alone is knowledge and avidyā means pure ignorance and a creation of illusions which are unreal in nature. Obviously, the world being the creation of avidyā has no objective validity, but merely a sort of existence like the dream or illusion. In this view knowledge and ignorance are purely opposite in nature. Sri Aurobindo mentions it a ' fine excesser of dialectical intellect'.

But Sri Aurobindo vehemently criticises such a dialectical view. According to him, it is rigidly analytical and it cannot give us any sufficient judgment about spiritual truths. It works within the frame-work of its logic only.

His view regarding the origin and nature of ignorance has compelled him to depart from the dialectical intellect according to which the world existence are stamped with ignorance that can be

equated with dream or hallucination. Therefore Sri Aurobindo - tries to explain the origin of ignorance inside the integral scheme and points out that ignorance is very much an aspect of integral unity which does not affect the oneness of reality. Only a deep looking into our consciousness helps us to discover the nature of ignorance. Because both knowledge and ignorance are results of our consciousness, But a pertinent question may arise here : How is consciousness related to mind ? Is it identical with mind ? Sri Aurobindo answers the questions in the negative. According to him although consciousness seems to be identical with mind as a matter of fact, they are different. Our consciousness can not be identical with mind. Mind is not the whole of us; if mind were all, then mind itself being the product of māyā , ignorance created by mind would be regarded as the source of our existence ; the world becomes nothing but a subjective construction of the mind, a false , impermanent , illusion. Sri Aurobindo thus holds that only by looking deeply into our consciousness, the root of ignorance can be discovered. This deeply looking into the inside discloses to us that " ignorance must be a part of the movement of the One, a development of its consciousness knowingly adopted, to which it is not forcibly subjected but which it uses for its cosmic purpose."³²

But it must be noted that the Brahman , who is absolute consciousness, being integral in nature can not be subject to ignorance. Again ignorance is not inherent in the multiplicity of the souls ; it is not the nature of the 'many', because by the 'many' we mean the same Divine self in all, individualised indeed, but still one

32. The Life Divine , (Op. Cit.) p. 567.

in conscious being with all in a single universality and one too with the original. Then the question may arise - how does ignorance come into existence and maintain itself in action ? Sri Aurobindo states that ignorance appears at a later stage - a product of evolutionary movement. It comes into existence when mind is separated from its spiritual and supramental basis. As a result of this the jīvatman identifies itself with the form by dividing mind.

Ignorance - is therefore the outcome of some particularising action in the exclusive Conscious-Force absorbing in its works. It is a concentrated energy which acts on the form by shutting out the consciousness that exists in each form and as a result of this the individual consciousness becomes unaware of its own total self.

Sri Aurobindo adds " the origin of the Ignorance must then be sought for in some self - absorbed concentration of Tapas, of Conscious-Force in action on a separate movement of the Force . . . "33

A little reflection on our inner self would at once reveal the nature of this Conscious-Force or Tapas the essential principle of energy. By inner self of a human being, from ordinary and commonly taken standpoint, we mean the sum of the apparent movements of consciousness of that being. But behind this apparent movements there exists a vast stream of consciousness that remains beyond the scope of our awareness. It is said to be the psychic entity of the subliminal self, the super conscient, the sub-conscient being. It is the passive aspect of our consciousness which is hidden in all our movements. But the man during his superficial workings is not aware of

33. Ibid, p. 580.

this greater existence. When man engages himself in his superficial workings, a power of exclusive concentration builds a wall of separation from his greater consciousness which is the source of all movements. This power of concentration as described by Sri Aurobindo is 'a limited practical self oblivious power'. It is this power through which the man is capable of absorbing in his own movement and forgets the rest of himself. This is the very nature of ignorance. The term 'ignorance' has not been used in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo in any extreme sense of the word, but only a self-limiting knowledge by which a man forgets his real nature and extends to a complete self-forgetfulness in the practical work in which he is engaged.

This very nature of ignorance even works in the engagement of the particular action of a man. This power of self-forgetfulness enables an actor to forget himself and he identifies himself for this time only with this particular role. Without this self-limiting power he can not be a successful actor.

To Sri Aurobindo, as it is evident from The Life Divine and The Synthesis of Yoga or The Human Cycle, philosophical enterprise should not confine itself to purely intellectual system only as it is generally the case in many modern European philosophical systems, but a spiritual discipline where the possibility of a supra-intellectual intuition comes first and then comes the rational analysis. It is also true that such supra-rational intuition cannot be reduced to a logical language which often functions through two-valued logic of 'is' and 'is not'. Sri Aurobindo perhaps seeing this, admits the varying levels and degrees of spiritual realizations. For him this supra-rational state involves a vision of the integral Reality, and the world perceived in the unity of a self-evolving and self-reveal-

ing Absolute. In the course of knowledge situation, our perceptual knowledge is only an immediate awareness of the external facts. Reason is an advanced step upon perception. It enables us to have awareness of before and after and far out into the distant. But rational analysis functions in mental construction through piecing together of the perceptual data. Obviously for Sri Aurobindo, reason has its own limitation although it is a helper in correcting perceptual shortcomings. Reason basically makes us aware of external things in various relations of their appearances. Collecting the data on the basis of empirical enquiry, reason confidently generalizes and draws inferences. But this is not all for human progress in knowledge situation and spiritual upgradation. Man's spiritual aspiration exceeds the scope of reason in order to know a thing directly in its integral unity, in its essential being from within, ' otherwise than constructing its nature from a knowledge of its empirical qualities '. Such intuitive knowledge is called by Sri Aurobindo ' Knowledge by Identity ' in order to distinguish it from what he calls ' Separative Knowledge '. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is said to be a product of yoga offering to enable the seeker after knowledge to progressively rising from intellectual notions of reality to an immediate knowledge by identity. By ' vidyā ' thus in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy we are to mean this intuitive knowledge or the knowledge by Identity whereas the separative knowledge is ' avidyā '. Even the fact of evil is conceived as an incident in the progressive realization of the Good and not a refusal of the eternal Goodness and perfection of the Absolute. In the hierarchy of evolutionary movement, ignorance is taken to be a means to knowledge. Evil is not something illusory. It is at

a particular plane of consciousness, real ; it is said to be the superficial mental consciousness. It cannot be said to be an absolute negation of Goodness, since the deeper self within us sharing the higher truth is a perfect safeguard against it . In view of this ignorance would be only an expression of ' the self-limitation of the Absolute ' .

This self-limiting Ignorance, as it is stated, is considered by Sri Aurobindo as a power of Absolute. The world is a progressive self-expression, a manifestation of the Absolute. And without this ignorance the object of manifestation of the world would not be possible or could not be done at all in the way in which it is being done. The Absolute is not really limited putting forth ignorance. It is through the power that the deeper eternal self throws itself out as the adventure in Time. It is the natural play of the Absolute throwing itself into a cosmos relation. Therefore avidyā or ignorance does not create any limitation to the Divine consciousness. Knowledge and ignorance both are needful to the purpose of the Divine's self manifestation and self-limitation into the process of material and vital energy and to the succession of moments. Both are powers of the Citśakti inherent in the supramental knowledge of Brahman. There is no fundamental differences between knowledge and ignorance, they are only apparently different. Vidyā is the principle which regulates oneness or unity whereas avidyā is the principle of difference or multiplication . Ignorance is considered as one of the possible poises of relation of the Absolute in its manifestation, a relation of the infinite in its various finite actions, a natural capacity of the one to enjoy itself in the Many. In the words of Sri Aurobindo " Saccidānanda ' descends into the material Nescience and puts on its pheno-

menal ignorance as a superficial mask in which he hides himself from his own conscious energy, leaving itself-forgetful and absorbed in its works and forms."³⁴

Sri Aurobindo recognises a māyā of knowledge , a power which had made the ignorance possible , even inevitable, but not a māyā of ignorance. The works of māyā look like the production of supra-rational magical power which arranges things according to its wisdom or phantasy. Sri Aurobindo thinks that māyā is the logic of the way of Universal Being or Brahman. Brahman, the Reality is self-existent and Sri Aurobindo describes māyā as the consciousness and force of its self-existence. Brahman is regarded as the self of all existence. - Ātman, while māyā is the self-power , Ātmaśakti of the Ātman. The Absolute that manifests things or manifests itself in them looks to our reason like a magician and his power or māyā is a creative magic. But there is the difference between the magic of a magician and the magic of the Supreme. What does the Supreme Creator through his magic is not a phantasy.

Sri Aurobindo raises objection against the illusionist that nowhere in the Upaniṣads it is said that the cosmic universe is the product of illusion, but it is constructed by māyā - the 'Ātmaśakti' of the Brahman. To Sri Aurobindo the universe with its activity may not be a meaningless play, a pointless fancy, it indicates a purpose, an end, a goal. The evolutionary process is going to establish the divine names and forms in terrestrial individuals leading a divine life, individually and collectively here. Sri Aurobindo thinks that in the illusory concept of māyā which negates the world, the experience " I am that " is vitiated by an erroneous thought, for there is

34. Ibid. p. 591.

no ' I ' only ' that ' . He proclaims " A real solution of existence can only stand upon a truth that accounts for our existence and world existence, reconciles their truth, their right relation and the truth of their relation to whatever transcendent Reality is the source of everything. But this implies some Reality of individual and cosmos, some true relation of the One Existence and all existences, of relative experience, and of the Absolute."³⁵ In his work ' The Life Divine ' he tries to establish this truth. He believes that the self, the spirit , the reality would evolve its complete truth of being and consciousness in that life and matter. The individual is to return into its Absolute not through a frustration of life but through a spiritual completeness of itself in life. Māyā , for Sri Aurobindo, is a Power of liberation that allows the spiritual individual to stand unbound by the limitations of objective self-expression, and to know clearly that he is eternally one with the transcendent spirit.

To sum up any kind of uncompromising rejection of the world, any kind of negativist attitude towards individual life cannot be acceptable to Sri Aurobindo. On the contrary, the world with all its diversity marches on perpetually in pursuance of the progressive realisation of the Absolute, Nature advances to the level of supermind. Supermind in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy stands for the means of direct synthetic knowledge of the unified Reality. The reaching of such a stage is Nature's own yoga. Human being, at this stage of evolution is capable of ' conscious participation and acceleration ' of the course of this development. From this it appears that Sri Aurobindo's

35. The Life Divine (Op. Cit.) p. 468.

' Integral Yoga ' is an indispensable ground for understanding his philosophy " as a promise of the demonstration in experience of the truths he intellectually propounds."³⁶

36. Dr. Indra Sen : Is Maya Vada Defensible ? The Philosophical Quarterly (vol. 20, 1944-45) p. 94.