

CHAPTER - 6  
CONCLUSION AND CRITICAL REMARKS :

## CONCLUSION AND CRITICAL REMARKS :

I. Summary of the Vedic-Upaniṣadic and the Advaita views on māyā and their critical analysis:

So we have come to the concluding part of our study. This last chapter will be devoted to determining the marks of the special contributions of the modern interpreters of the concept of māyā. And in doing so, we shall stress on the basic points of agreement in modern interpreters' writings as well as their fundamental and radical points of departure from the traditional school of Vedānta of Śaṅkarācārya. In the introductory chapter we have tried to trace the origin of māyā in ancient philosophical literature of Indian heritage right from Vedic-Upaniṣadic age to the age of distinguished philosophical school-builders. The Upaniṣads do not outline throughout any particular theory. On the contrary, they contain different theories which are meant for people at different levels of spiritual upgradation. Their apparent antinomies would be reconciled if we bear in mind the principle of Adhikāribheda, as all are not, equally capable of apprehending the same truth. Precisely that may be the ground for universal acceptance of upaniṣadic teaching by all classes and denominations in ancient days. Sometimes philosophers of old days, instead of using the term māyā, preferred to use the allied concepts in order to explain the same type of problem as done by Vedic-Upaniṣadic thinkers by the concept māyā. And the concept was fully utilised for the first time by Gaudapāda for maintaining the non-dualistic nature of Reality and the explanation of the relation of that Reality to the world. In Advaitic philosophical treatises efforts have been made to build up a wonderful

system of metaphorical pursuit on the basis of solid reasoning of the Vedas and Upaniṣads. In Śāṅkarite tradition an earnest effort has been noticed to bring back the Indian world to its pristine purity offering the solid rationalistic foundations of the obscure arguments of the Vedas-Upaniṣads and revived the Vedānta philosophy on the one hand, unified the conflicting descriptions of Reality ( Brahman ) and caught the rhythm and beauty of ancient texts on the other. According to Śāṅkara, man can travel slowly in the spiritual path of upward road and all the diverse presentations are required to suit his diverse capabilities. His Vivekacūḍāmaṇi's concluding verse reads thus :

" For those ( aspirants ) who through delusion wander about, lost in the desert paths of this world of samsāra, surely afflicted by the scorching sunrays of threefold misery ( Physical, natural and spiritual), and the athirst for the saving waters of truth, here is this triumphant message of Śrī Śāṅkara, pointing out within easy reach the blissful ocean of Nectare, the non-dual Brahman, leading to the cessation of all miseries ( based on dualistic notions ) and to spiritual Liberation ".<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed true that Śāṅkara with a comprehensive penetrating intellect, breadth of vision, depth of insight and a daring passion for truth establishes the supremacy of the Ātman as the only irrefutable Reality within intuitive insight ( aparokṣānubhūti ) of all, and

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1. Samsārādhvani tāpabhānukirana-prodbhūtadāhavyathā-khinnānām  
jalākāṁksayā marubhūbibhrāntiā paribhrāmyatām /  
Atyāsanna-sudhām vudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayam darśaya-tyeṣā  
śāṅkara-bhārati vijayate nirvānasamdāyini // |580|  
- Vivekacūḍāmaṇi ( Bengali Tr. ), ( 2nd Ed. R.K. Mission Ashram,  
Patna, 1984 ) p. 369.

declares the identity of Ātman with Brahman, with rational foundation. For Śāṅkara, world is mithyā or māyā in the sense that it cannot be categorised as either sat ( existent ) or asat ( non-existent ) with certitude. Māyā is the power of deluding man into believing that the world is real and thus it is prapañca or wrong cognition. Śāṅkara posits the imponderable realistic māyā-śakti of Brahman as the link between the Absolute and the relative. Amidst all the changes and modifications of worldly phenomena, we intuitively aware of the non-changing identity and empirical cognition of changes are possible on account of the fact that unchanging Absolute Reality is behind these changes. But in self-knowledge there is no experience of māyā or its effects. Śāṅkara thus says that māyā is experienced in māyā only. Absolute does not feel the absence of the finite or the relative although it is finite or relative which feels the infinite Absolute as its background. This is the intended meaning of saying that from transcendental standpoint māyā ceases to exist, while from empirical point of view it makes man believing that the world is real. By mithyā, Śāṅkara thus means a mixture of the absolutely real with the conditionally real. ( Satyanrte Mithunī kriyā mithyā ). The multiplicity of the world-show is ultimately false just like our reflections in the mirror, we can see reflections as long as we ourselves are before the mirror, But as soon as we move away, our shadows cease to appear. That is to say, even when we see the shadows or reflections, they are not in the mirror. It is the light that comes back reflected by the glass and we mistake the light for ourselves in the mirror. Śāṅkara, in other words is not in favour of the organic view of the Infinite Absolute and the

finite world of beings. As regards the status of the world, Śaṅkara in the ' Mohamudgara ' gives a comparison. He considers this world to be the drops of water in the lotus leaf and says it māyā-māyāmayam idam akhilam viditvā , - that is to say , that this world is false and thereby it is advisable to leave all attachments towards this world in order to realise Brahman. He considers māyā as indescribable (anirvacaniya ), because it can neither be described as sat ( real ) nor asat ( unreal ). To explain it with an example, he refers to the instance of illusory awareness of a snake in a rope. It is said that the snake existing in the place of rope has got both reality and unreality. It is real in the sense that we are really perceiving a snake there and on account of which we have various psycho-physical activities. Had there been no snake there we would not have activities like these. Hence, there is a reality which is of apparent type ( prātibhāsikasattā ). On the other hand, when the knowledge of snake is contradicted by the knowledge of rope, the same object is taken as unreal. Hence, the Advaitins have ascribed both the property of reality and unreality to the same object. As both reality and unreality is very difficult to conceive simultaneously, it is called indescribable. So far as this part of the theory is concerned, it is very much clear. But when there is the absence of the direct apprehension of Brahman ( Brahmasākṣātkāra ), the whole world seems to be real. But after the self-realisation this world is taken to be unreal or mithyā. When the world is taken real, there is no realisation of Brahman. When Brahman is realised, there is no awareness of the whole world, not to speak of its ' unreality '. In the previous case when the knowledge of snake is sublated by the knowledge of rope, an individual has kept the impression

of the previous object ( i.e. snake ) which is nullified by the subsequent knowledge of rope. In other words, an individual is able to discriminate between two objects. i.e. snake and rope. The case is not the same with the realisation of Brahman. The world which is taken as real is not taken as unreal due to not having awareness of this world. It seems to a seer that the whole world has no other existence than that of Brahman. Due to having this realisation one would not be in a position to realise the unreality of the world. For, to him the whole world and Brahman are not two , but one and identified. In order to determine the unreality of the world the notion of duality is to be presupposed. But in the transcendental stage there is no such duality at all. Moreover, when the ' snake ' is described as both sat and asat , it is within the jurisdiction of the phenomenal world. But in the case of world such interpretation is not at all possible as this does not occur within this mundane world due to having transcendental Reality at this stage.

An individual who has realised Brahman does not have any notion of duality. In fact, he does not think the world as Māyā also, because he has no idea of an object's existence other than Brahman. Actually the world has been described as Māyā by an indifferent viewer who has not realised Brahman. In fact, this description of the world is a mere description done by an individual who , though not realised Brahman, has philosophised the situation by describing the state which has got a secondary value i.e. Tatastha. The above-mentioned view may be substantiated following the line of Dharmarājādharīndra. While formulating the definition of Pramā, he has incorporated a term

' aviṣayaka ' to the knowledge, which , in our opinion, is philosophically very much important in the present context. In this connection he says that knowledge is of two types : Viṣayaka ( having a content ) and aviṣayaka ( not having any content ). So far as the phenomenal objects are concerned, it is stated to be having some content like a jar etc. But just after the realisation of Brahman one bears a knowledge with ' K ' having no content at all. In fact, the realisation of Brahman is itself a Knowledge. That which is in the form of knowledge is Brahman. In other words, Brahman itself is Knowledge and hence we can not say - ' Knowledge of Brahman '. If Brahman is taken as a content of knowledge, it will be taken as Sapādhika Brahman, but not Pure Brahman, for becoming the ' object of knowledge ' which is not accepted as ultimate knowledge in Advaita Vedāntā. When some one realises Brahman, there is only Knowledge having no object, having no awareness of the object other than the Brahman.

Coming down to the modern interpretations in the hands of Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo we have noticed that a peculiar but amazing feature of reconciliation of the ancient wisdom with the perpetual becoming of the world-phenomena. And this interpretation of māyā is seen as a trend of idealistic approach that both respects the ancient wisdom and claims freedom from it . The modern approach to the problem of māyā has been developed without an out and out opposition to the Śāṅkarite system, but by adding something to it. The modern thinkers with their utmost zeal have tried to retain the status of the world as not being illusory.

## II. Swami Vivekananda's view on 'Māyā' evaluated :

To speak of Swami Vivekananda, it may be pointed out that his conception of reality although have some similarity with <sup>the</sup> Śāṅkarite one, it differs from <sup>the</sup> Śāṅkarite interpretation because, Swami Vivekananda is unwilling to accept the description of Saguna Brahman or God as a description from lower mental platform. For him the distinction between Absolute ( Brahman ) and God as made by some Advaitins is redundant. As a matter of fact , Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of God has been shaped by the simple teaching of his Guru Sri Ramkrishna. Sri Ramkrishna explains the distinction between formless and the formed ( Nirākāra and Sākāra ) with the analogy of water and ice. There is no fundamental difference between the two , one is not more real than the other, rather it indicates that there are infinite dimensions of Reality's manifestation. As a result of this, there may be variety of approaches to Reality. For Swami Vivekananda, the controversy among the different approaches to Reality in no way affects the nature of what is Real. It is perhaps for the fact that Swami Vivekananda's sole intention was to bring the truth of Vedānta within the easy reach of the masses. Such an all-engulfing wholistic conception of non-dualistic Reality at once induces Swami Vivekananda to discuss the nature of the world in a slightly different way than that of Śāṅkara. For Śāṅkara, the world creation from the transcendental standpoint is unreal though it has a relative reality from the empirical viewpoint. Swami Vivekananda here tries to make a balance between two extreme positions. Without contradicting the basic Advaitic principle of non-duality, Swami Vivekananda argues that since the world

is a creation of God and since God is the only reality and God creates the world ' involving itself ', the world is an aspect of the Reality and thus not illusory or unreal. However, in realization of Reality, this ' creation ' and ' created ' distinction would not exist but for all practical purpose the reality of the world cannot be denied. For Vivekananda, unlike Śaṅkara, the word ' mithyā ' has a specific technical sense. It means the impermanence, constantly changing and varying nature of the universe ( Saṅcarati iti saṁsāra ). A thing is said to be ' mithyā ' ( false ) in multivalued vedāntic logic, if it has no fixed or absolute characteristic ( lakṣaṇa ). It is not opposite to ' the Truth ' or ' Real '. According to Vivekananda, by the word ' mithyā ' a Vedāntin intends to emphasise that the world ( jaḡat ) as the expression of Brahman cannot be totally zero . If everything is Brahman, then the world is not outside Brahman. This in turn indicates that the world-process is not a completed one but a continuous flow from subtle form to its grosser form. For him, man is potentially divine and thus the goal of our life is to realise this divinity that already in us. This may be treated as a precise ground for differing his interpretation of māyā from in-toto <sup>the</sup> Śaṅkarite one. In the Śaṅkarite interpretation, māyā is the deluding power of the Creator and the illusory status of the world is a mere magical creation of Māyā . On the contrary, Vivekananda asserts that māyā is a fact about the nature of the universe, he seeks to explain the fundamental features of the world as we experience around us. Without contradicting the Advaitic view that māyā is a power for the creation of the world, Vivekananda places māyā somewhere between Absolute Being and non-being. In our world of experience we get the awareness of the relation of things and not the

things-in-themselves. This relational knowledge of things is known as knowledge of facts, not of things. The creation of the world although on account of māyā is not illusory. In the practical Vedānta of Vivekananda the reality of the world has been maintained along with the metaphysical Absolute of Śaṅkara. The world is an important stepping stone leading to the realization of the ultimate unity of duality and multiplicity and māyā states only the status of the world as subject to space-time relation. Perhaps this is the reason why it is said that the monistic philosophy of Vivekananda is not a sheer continuation of the tradition. In Vivekacūḍāmaṇi Śaṅkara describes māyā as the unmanifested power of Brahman and the material cause of the creation of the world. The existence of māyā is to be inferred from the world of multiplicity as its effects.<sup>2</sup> But Vivekananda is not interested to give such explanation. He neither regards the world as the effect of ignorance ( avidyā ) nor mentions in his writings māyā as the material cause of the world. He is rather satisfied with describing the world as it is - that is, a fact consisting of an admixture of being and becoming. In other words, Vivekananda does not advance any theory of māyā ; rather he describes what is in our experience the status of the world and thus he says that māyā is a statement of fact .

Vivekananda's philosophy is thus a new interpretation of traditional Vedānta in the sense that within the boundary of monistic philosophy, it retains the world as well as God. He had great regard for Rāmājuna's path of devotion too. We find an wonderful synthesis of knowledge , devotion and action in his Neo-Vedānta. For him, the realm of the Absolute ( of Śaṅkara ) and the realm of the reality of the

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2. Avyakta-nāmnī parameśāśaktir nādyavidyā trigunātmikā parā /

world are only two dimensions of one and the same Reality. According to Vivekananda, the creation of the world of multiplicity with constant flux on the seat of one Brahman, although on account of māyā, is not illusory. He rather tries to interpret the basic spiritualistic tenets of traditional Vedānta philosophy in the light of rationalistic as well as scientific outlook of his time. For the same ground unlike Śāṅkara, he regards the world as not anirvacaniya — neither real nor unreal nor both. He is interested to point out that this world has a relative existence, apart from Brahman it has no reality of its own. Our experience of the world is only a synthesis of being and becoming as neutralised. So māyā is a statement of fact, a description of what is going on but not a doctrine or theory for the explanation of the world.<sup>3</sup>

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Kāryānumeyā sudhiyaiva māyā yayā jagat sarvamidaṁ prasūyate //  
 - Vivekacūḍāmaṇiḥ - verse 108 ( Op. Cit. ) p. 66.

3. It is interesting to note in the passing that Rabindranath Tagore, the poet philosopher also does not accept māyā as delusion. For him māyā is a self-imposed limitation of the Absolute. Śāṅkara says that world is māyā and it is neither real nor unreal nor both. Rabindranath, on the contrary, says that māyā has being since the finitude which is produced by māyā, is a matter of empirical apprehension; it has 'non being' since when infinity is realised, māyā ceases to exist.

Rabindranath could not admit such a standpoint with regard to the status of the world as 'something illusory'. He is not a traveller in the path of knowledge only for spiritual realization. His is a rather synthesis of knowledge, action and devotion. He is interested to bring to our notice the image of man as total being who realises one Absolute in—and through the variegated hues. He does not believe in asceticism or renunciation of the world and thus in the Naivedya he says " Deliverance is not for me renunciation, I feel

To put it otherwise, according to Vivekananda, each and every object is māyā in the sense of relativity. There, as we get in Śāṅkara, does not arise any question of bringing any transcendental reality. Vivekananda has advocated such a non-traditional interpretation of māyā after considering the socio-economic situation of the country in his time. He intentionally has not brought the notion of Brahman or Ultimate Reality while discussing the concept of māyā directly, because he knows that the persons to whom his views are presented are believers of materialism and trained in western culture. The Śāṅkarite interpretation of māyā will fall flat upon them and hence, it will not help them for their social or moral upliftment. He has shown that māyā is not to be taken in the sense of illusion, but in the sense of relativity. He has emphasised on this notion because, he knows that the description of māyā as illusion will attract neither the neglected down-trodden people nor the ' intellectuals who are respectful towards foreign ideas and ideals '. Vivekananda's intention was to bring a social harmony among all human beings. To him one's own happiness and peace cannot be described as really ' peace ' if others are in distress. Why does an individual think about the welfare of others ? In reply, it can be said that one should think about the welfare of others, because one will see one's ownself in all and hence there does not arise any question of exploitation or

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the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight " -

( Vairāgya sādhanē mukti, se amār nay, asankhya bandhana mājhe mahānandamay labhiva muktir svād. - Naivedya, verse No. 30 in Rabindra Racanāvali Vol. 4, Visva Bharati, 1394 B.S. - p. 281 )

Like Vaiṣṇava philosophers, Tagore in ' The Religion of Man ' puts forward the opinion that the finite being is a very significant part in the scheme of the Universe and māyā for him, the creative energy of the Absolute.

hatred etc. This is the metaphysical justification for being moral or leading a moral life. Keeping the Vedāntic teaching intact, he brought out the logical implications of it in practice.

Again, Swami Vivekananda can not accept any view that describes the world as māyā in the sense of illusion, because, Swami Vivekananda was primarily concerned with the empirical world which is very much connected with action. By 'action' Swami Vivekananda refers to 'good actions' which beget 'good life', a good social atmosphere by way of doing social welfare, serving others. For this reason, in his different lectures, he has given the body, the material aspect of individual's life as much importance as spirituality. Even he advises people to fulfil first their material needs and afterwards religion or spirituality. Thus no 'world-negating', 'life-denying' attitude is acceptable to him, no bodily or material object is illusory, but it is as real as spirit. To him all human beings are the manifestations of Divinity. Service of human beings, to him, is the service of God.

A question may arise in connection with Swami Vivekananda's philosophy of action : that a good action in the sense of social welfare, always presupposes 'duality'. In other words, unless there is no agent of doing service ( sevaka ), there can not be persons receiving service ( sevyā ) and this again implies ' a sevyā-sevaka ' relationship. For this reason Swami Vivekananda may be described neither as kevalādvaitin nor Viśiṣṭādvaitin . He is not an advaitin of <sup>the</sup> Śāṅkarite school because when Śāṅkara maintains the distinction between God ( saguna Brahman ) and Absolute ( Nirguna Brahman ), Swami Vivekananda obliterates it. For Śāṅkara only transcendental standpoint is ultimately real and thus

the empirical world does not get any importance in his hands. Vivekananda, on the otherhand, from practical consideration and empirical standpoint tries to bring the truth of Vedānta in his philosophy of action. His interest in this respect is mundane rather than transcendental. He takes the Advaitic teaching so far as the universality of self in all beings is concerned. Vivekananda, can not be described as Viśiṣṭādvaitin either, because he has admitted a man's transformation to Divinity. Rāmānuja would not accept this transformation of man to Divinity. To him a man having atomic dimension can not be transformed into God which is Ubiquitus ( vibhu ). An individual is always a devotee ( bhakta ) and God is Bhagavān and thus devotee and God can never be absolutely equal. An individual being is always limited, finite having limited power and capacity. This is not acceptable to Vivekananda. Vivekananda has forcibly said that a human being is potentially Divine and he can acquire the power of Divinity in him.<sup>4</sup> If someone forgets his very particular nature, he thinks himself as fearful, lack of

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4. Vivekananda quotes Śruti describing ' Amṛtasya putrāḥ ' i.e. ' Children of the Immortal '. It may be noted that the adjunct ' amṛtasya putrāḥ ' was attached to the gods called viśvadevāḥ in the Rgveda, but not to human beings. Vivekananda has borrowed the term from the Rgveda and has given a new interpretation of it after keeping his own philosophical position in view. To him, all human beings are the manifestations of the Divinity and hence, there is no harm if they are taken as ' children of the Immortals '. In fact , he cannot think of the existence of gods like viśvadevāḥ etc. apart from human beings.

Self-confidence, non-spirited. When the veil of ignorance is removed, he will think himself as fearless ( abhih ), spirited and having self-reliance etc., which is his essential nature. This is also described by Patañjali as ' Tadādrastuḥ svarūpe avasthānam ' - that is, when a seer realises this reality as said earlier, he resides in his own essence.

From what has been stated above, it is evident that Vivekananda's philosophical position stands in between Kevalādvaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita and it is very much difficult to categorise. Due to this perhaps his philosophical position is described as ' practical vedānta ' or ' vyavahārika vedānta '. It is vedānta, no doubt, the principles of which are applied in the practical world, but not transcendental world. Vivekananda opines that if someone thinks other social beings as his ownself and if he leads a life by way of doing karma ( action ) connected with moral values or human welfare ( bahujana hitāya ), it is the ' good life ' or ' Divine life '. As Swami Vivekananda is more concerned with the practical life through vedānta, our day-to-day needs are not unreal to him, but very much real. Hence, though Swami Vivekananda was largely influenced by the Advaitic thought in his interpretation of māyā, he had shown his points of departure from Śāṅkara also. His luminous description in modern terms, his positive approach to the science of life, should be remembered in our troubled world pre-eminently torn by dubitability and convictions of nullity.

### III. Radhakrishnan's view on māyā evaluated :

Now we may consider Radhakrishnan's view. As a background of Radhakrishnan's view on māyā we have an overall view of his philosophical position in the main part of our dissertation. Now in order to evaluate Radhakrishnan's interpretations of māyā, we may have a

résumé of his philosophical position and this may help us to derive our inferences about the gravity and worth of his interpretation. In epistemological sphere, Radhakrishnan gave highest priority to intuitive knowledge which has the characteristic of presentational immediacy. For him our human intellect is discursive and it is incapable of grasping the wholeness of reality. His epistemological analysis is moulded by his metaphysical convictions that truth is 'non-one-sided' and there are two levels of reality. As a criterion of truth he is in favour of coherence and self-evidence. The world is true in so far it has coherence with the Absolute truth - that is, it is an element of the Absolute in the sport of self-elevation. The truth of the absolute is self-evident. In Radhakrishnan's analysis we see that reality is conceived as having the elements, being and becoming, it is a unity and what is called truth is completely identical with what is called reality. In order to give rooms for the different types of beings, he conceives the reality as transpersonal as well as personal.

With this summation of Radhakrishnan's philosophy, let us try to evaluate some of the questions directly related to his interpretation of māyā. As we have seen in the main text, that Radhakrishnan suggests six different significance of the word māyā, such as inexplicable mystery, creative power, primal matter, concealment, duality of consciousness and matter, and one-sided dependence. A very pertinent question may be raised at this point : What is the justificatory of accepting so many connotations ? Is it really a problem for a philosopher in general or only to one who has unshaken belief in the 'one-reality-ism' ?

Reflections would show that Dr. Radhakrishnan's acquaintance with modern western philosophy and his own conviction that truth is multi-dimensional may make him tempted to scrutiny the concept of māyā from epistemological, cosmological, axiological and soteriological standpoints. And in most of the cases, his metaphysical pre-suppositions - that is - his conviction for two levels of reality and unconditional reverence and love for non-dualistic vedāntic teachings of ancient Indian culture lead him to consider the matter from different six senses. And it is his credit to show that none of the six senses indicate 'illusion'. When it is said that the world is māyā it means that the world is sat as a part of the Absolute and hence it is not illusion. It is mithyā or false in the sense that it is not the whole, the absolute. In other words, it is only 'pen-ultimately real', Brahman or <sup>the</sup> Absolute being the sole ultimate reality. The world's 'likeness' can not be denied.

But Dr. Radhakrishnan's search for rational foundations of ancient wisdom of advaita vedānta in modern times invites a few fresh difficulties for itself. A critic may point out that the metaphysical pre-supposition of his theory of knowledge makes it weak, because it rests on 'a split-level view of ontology or reality'. Unlike most of the modern philosophers and like many theologians and mystics, he has used trans-human experience as the basis of his knowledge claims.<sup>5</sup>

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5. In one of his papers Radhakrishnan explains thus :

" Reality according to the Vedānta, has two aspects, the higher and the lower, the fixed and the changing, the absolute and the relative " - the Ethics of the Bhagavadgītā and Kant, International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 21, July 1911, p. 466.

But a critic may argue that it is not an wise-task for a philosopher to put reason in favour of his own particular tradition " by claiming access to a body of knowledge which is available only to believers of his own particular tradition ".<sup>6</sup> Though it is true that the line of demarcation between religion and philosophy in India is so thin that one overlaps and influences other, still what Radhakrishnan claims seems to be access. W.C. Smith's observation in another context seems to be relevant here. Smith observes , " No statement about a religion is valid unless it can be acknowledged by that religion's believers . . . . . The reverse is not true ".<sup>7</sup> When Radhakrishnan describes māyā as the inexplicable mystery, he indicates the epistemological perplexity that arises in connection to explaining the relation of the monistic conception of reality and the multiplicity of the world. But to a person who does not believe in the ultimate oneness of things, it is not a problem. A pluralist thus sees no good reasons regarding the inexplicability of any relation between any two things and thus he may reject the legitimacy of the concept of māyā.

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Again, in another context he put his observation in the following words : " In man there is a struggle between the higher and the lower . . . . He is an amphibious animal living in two worlds "- The Reign of Religion in contemporary philosophy ( London, Mc Millan, 1920 ) p. 431.

6. D.A. Brave : Māyā in Radhakrishnan's Thought , (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass 1984), p. 139.
7. W.C. Smith : Religion : Whither and why ? in The History of Religious Essays in Methodology ed. M. Eliade & Joseph , M. Kitagawa ( Chicago, Chicago University 1959 ) pp. 42-43.

Again, Radhakrishnan's contention that māyā is a creative power of self-becoming on the part of the Absolute may not satisfy the philosophical anticipation of open-thinking in order to reach the truth. An unbiased reflector may point out that Radhakrishnan's unshaken bias towards Advaita Vedānta could not permit him to grant ontological independence to māyā, which is rather put by him on a lower level of reality. In Advaita Vedānta the concept of māyā comes as a 'stop-gap-measure' in order to explain the multiplicity of the world we see and feel, without contradicting the ultimate sole-ness of reality. On account of his too much adherence to Advaita Vedānta and in-depth feeling for 'the likeness' of the world, he admits aparokṣānubhūti or intuitive experience as the highest gradation in epistemological analysis. His epistemological analysis are nourished by his metaphysical presuppositions and faith in the traditional monistic culture. Naturally, a dualist or a pluralist would not feel any inclination or intellectual sympathy for the problem Radhakrishnan faces. They would rather say that here they are not seeing any problem at all.

Moreover, while dealing with māyā as a primal matter and Īśvara as a primal consciousness, Radhakrishnan makes an attempt to reconcile the Sāṃkhya dualism with Vedāntic monism. Radhakrishnan agrees with the Sāṃkhya that all existence arises from prakṛti and hence it can not be taken as illusion. He has accepted māyā in the sense of prakṛti from which all creation is possible. It is performed by prakṛti after being dependent on Brahman. The phrase 'being dependent on Brahman' is added by him only to harmonize the Sāṃkhya and

Advaita position. Māyā in the sense of prakṛti is justified if the above mentioned phrase is added to it by way of justification. From this the sixth meaning of the term māyā i.e. one-sided dependence, follows. As this meaning can already be traced within the fourth meaning i.e. ' māyā as Primal Matter ' by way of clarification, there is, in our opinion, hardly any justification for accepting the sixth meaning. Prakṛti creates everything means it creates all beings dependent on Brahman. In view of the above, the explanation of the term as ' one-sided dependence ' seems to be tautologous, and there is no novelty in it. A critic would thus say that this is a futile attempt to unite the Sāṃkhya view with the Vedāntic one. Because the Sāṃkhya philosophy grants absolutely independent status to both matter ( Prakṛti ) and spirit ( Puruṣa ) whereas in Radhakrishnan's system of thought, matter is something sub-ordinate to spirit, it has the relative ontological status on the lower level. In modern secular world view, matter is recognised as independent ontological reality. In view of this, it may be said that his undue reverence for the ancient traditional wisdom of monistic thinking makes Radhakrishnan's interpretation of māyā far from being satisfactory to others. However, it may bring some elements of satisfaction only for those who from the very beginning admit his non-dualistic and wholistic conception of reality and thus his interpretation of māyā is not a total success.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Donald.A.Brave very aptly evaluates Radhakrishnan's view on māyā in the following words :

" Radhakrishnan's refusal to grant matter an independent ontological status is a refusal which brought him great intellectual distress. In so many ways, he is open to a modernist, secular

Besides, Radhakrishnan is not very much clear in his discussion with regard to value. He often urges that there is enough room for positive ethics in Vedānta philosophy. For Radhakrishnan, there is no ethical judgment which is absolutely right or wrong. He has the love for the duality of things and side by side he has reverence for non-dualistic metaphysics. But how an ethical judgment would be connected with a metaphysical proposition ? Radhakrishnan is not specific about the answer to this. He speaks of ideals, values etc. as creative forces and māyā too as creative force on the part of the absolute. But surprisingly he speaks of unreal values. He did not elaborate how there can be unreal values. It is admitted in philosophic circle that values may be relative but it cannot be unreal. If something is unreal ( Asat ), it cannot be creative.

Furthermore, in dealing with māyā as one-sided dependence. - the dependence of the world on Brahman, Radhakrishnan excludes all rooms for community. The term Community implies a relationship among beings characterised by mutual dependence. And in Radhakrishnan's philosophy, God does not require the world or the individuals. On the contrary, the world with all its multiplicity requires God for its reality as a part of the whole. Naturally there is no community relation or intimate relation between the Absolute reality and what is pen-ultimately

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approach to philosophical problems. Yet his own faith and cumulative tradition prevent him from interpreting māyā so as to grant the material world absolute reality apart from Brahman ".  
 - Māyā in Radhakrishnan's Thought ( Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1984 ) p. 147.

real or intimately real. And if there is no community relationship, there will be little scope for metaphysical justification for ethical judgment.

Notwithstanding these subtle antinomies no one can ignore the positive contribution of Dr. Radhakrishnan in the interpretation of māyā. The doctrine of māyā is not a pivotal concept in his philosophy. It is rather a concept with which he dealt occasionally in order to clear some erroneous understanding created by the writings of some philosophers. To cite an example, Schweitzer in his Indian Thought and Its Development objected that "the Hindu doctrine of māyā declares that life is an illusion contains the flow of ' world and life-negation ' and in consequence Hindu Thought is non-ethical." <sup>9</sup> Radhakrishnan in Mysticism and Ethics in Hindu Thought refutes Schweitzer's charges one after another. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, for courage and confidence in moral difficulties, we are to look towards the teachings which affirm that our ideals are rooted in the universal nature of things. But such an ideal does not encourage inactivity, it rather tells us to do action only with the spirit of non-attachment to objects. To put it otherwise, such action is not an egoistic one but its orientation is the wellbeing of the totality of world as self-becoming element of the Absolute. Now at the end of our journey with the interpretation of māyā by Radhakrishnan, we may say that though there are some points of ' overdose ' of his undue faith and reverence for the traditional monistic philosophy of ancient India; which can not permit him to give more than a ' pen-ultimately ' real status to the

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9. Indian Thought and Its Development , ( London Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. 1936 ) p. 76.

world , his interpretation comes as a great rational defence of Advaita view and corrects the misinterpretation of it that it advocates ' an world-negating ', ' life denying ' philosophy. For Dr. Radhakrishnan, the world has a relational ontological status, all our worldly actions would be studied with reference to certain ontological ideals. In his own words, " One who has completely shaken himself free from selfishness is at liberty to take upon himself the task of the world. His attitude will be not world-seeking or world-fleeing but world-saving."<sup>10</sup> In the light of this Radhakrishnan's conception of two-level reality seems to be a core concept in his dealing with māyā. And this ' split-level view of reality ' is his weakness as well as his merit. It is the weakness of his interpretation, because it expresses his undue reverence for monistic philosophy and it is incapable of satisfying the philosophers who do not believe in the Vedāntic monism. It is also the achievement of Dr. Radhakrishnan's interpretation, because assigning a relative status or ' pen-ultimate status of reality ' to the world, he correctly falsified the illusory interpretations of māyā that gave the world a status not more than a mirage or a dream. In this respect Dr. Radhakrishnan's interpretation of māyā will be always remembered for its ' world saving ', ' life-saving ' orientations.

As regards Dr. Radhakrishnan's contention we have seen that he had never deviated from the central creed which consists of an unshakable faith in the essential teachings of the Upaniṣads, - the concluding part of the Vedas, yet it has always been a policy of Dr.

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10. Indian philosophy , Vol. 2 ( Op. Cit. ) p. 633.

Radhakrishnan to overcome philosophical antagonism by absorbing some of the traits of modern western philosophical traditions with which he had been in contact. Like Hegel and unlike Śaṅkara he presents us a wholistic, all inclusive conception of Reality that in consequence renders the illusory interpretation of māyā as erroneous or faulty. Like Rabindranath and Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan shows that the concept of māyā is not intended to mean the world as illusion in the Upanisadic Texts. P.D.Shastri's interpretation of the world following Śaṅkara as illusion is only a faulty interpretation in later days that renders all ethical activities in the world meaningless. Like Tagore and Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan's philosophy also centres around man. He has loved humanity and human values. He would have uttered like Tagore " I do not like to die in this beautiful world . I like to live amidst men." <sup>11</sup> Dr. Radhakrishnan enumerates six types of intended meanings of the word māyā and none of these includes it in the sense of illusion. He has a profound intention to stir the hearts of the public whose thought-currents have been shaped by the influence of modern science and technology on the one hand and who have been living a life of cross-cultural inter-global change. In Dr. Radhakrishnan's writings ' life and world-denying ' acquisition of Vedāntic teaching stands refuted. Dr. Radhakrishnan sees no sound basis for identifying the world appearance with illusion or abnormal experience. When we witness an opera, we eagerly await the appearance of the ' Prima donna '. This perceptual experience of ' Prima donna ' is neither illusion nor delusion to us. In the like manner, even

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11. "Marite cāhinā āmi sundara bhubane /

Mānaver mājhe āmi vāñcibāre cāi// - Kadi O Komal , verse entitled ' Prāṇa ' in Rabindra Racanāvali, Vol. 1, ( Visva Bharati, 1393 B.S.) p. 161.

appearance of the Brahman as the world is not an illusion. If this is not accepted as true, then the all inclusive Reality would be no reality without the appearance of the world. For Dr. Radhakrishnan, the world though wonderful is neither distorted nor an abnormally perceived one. Dr. Radhakrishnan's interpretation thus paves a way for metaphysical ground for positive ethical pursuit in the world. However, our study has shown evidences that between traditional Vedānta philosophy and Radhakrishnan's interpretation of it, there is not much of doctrinal dispute as upon the understanding of the urgency for expressing the view in such a fashion more suitable to the twentieth century mental framework.

#### IV. Sri Aurobindo's view on māyā evaluated :

Like Swami Vivekananda and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy may be traced to owe its origination in Vedic-upaniṣadic tradition. But Sri Aurobindo's 'Integral Non-dualism' is a wonderful and unique attempt to synthesis the persistent descords of traditional Vedāntic schools of Indian philosophy. For Sri Aurobindo, Absolute out of līlā , a joyful game, involves itself into life, mind and matter-the totality of which is visva, the world. Reality is spiritual. Matter is the most dormant form of consciousness. There is the evolution of life, mind, overmind and supermind. Instead of regarding the world as illusory, Sri Aurobindo clearly states that the world is not asat , even if it were a dream, it would be real as a dream - that is to say - it is real to itself. Out of the Infinite Existence ( Saccidānanda ), māyā comprehends, contains and fathoms the form of the world cosmos. Some Advaitins consider that mind is a thing of māyā , a substratum of ignorance. Some others call ignorance as illusion. Sri Aurobindo tries to explain these problems within the

scheme of his ' Integral Non-dualism ' by saying that instead of affecting the non-duality of Reality, the origin of ignorance is an indispensable aspect of integral unity. We have seen in the main part of our thesis that although Sri Aurobindo's explanation of the problem of māyā is similar to traditional Vedānta, yet it differs from Śaṅkara's māyā-vāda . Introducing the concept of ' involution ' and ' evolution ' in a modest way Sri Aurobindo reconciles the reality of the world with the non-dual Infinite Absolute Reality. To him Infinite Absolute Reality is not something minus the world. For him, māyā is only a force of Reality's Consciousness.

We have seen in the main text of our thesis that Sri Aurobindo speaks of evolution of Nature instead of creation. Evolution is a process of gradual development from simple to complex or from a less complex to a more complex one. Sri Aurobindo seeks to answer not only the ' howness ' of evolutionary achievements but also the more fundamental question of explanation, that is, the ' why-ness ' of it by introducing the concept of ' involution '. The Absolute out of sportive joy , involves itself into the most dormant form. It is on account of the descending movement of the Reality that ascending movement takes place in consequence. Evolution is thus for Sri Aurobindo, a reverse process of the Spirit from the lowest to the Highest. This may leave impression that it is a mere mechanical process of cyclic order and thus a psūdo explanation. Because one may further ask why does the Absolute descend ? In other words, if ' involution ' is the presupposition of ' evolution ', what causes ' involution ' ? On the part of Sri Aurobindo it is due to the fact of līlā , a sportive activity of the Absolute.

But a strict logician of finite two-valued logic may not be satisfied with such an answer. He could rather argue that introducing the concept of līlā, Sri Aurobindo instead of explaining the evolutionary process, rather explained it away. It may have some place in the mere emotive states of being but cannot have any proper place, in philosophy dominated by rational analysis. For the sake of explanation, a philosopher would seek an answer for the conditions that necessitate līlā of the Absolute in involutory descending.

But in our opinion, such a criticism arises only from a superficial study of his philosophy. Sri Aurobindo is quite justified in explaining the evolutionary progress introducing the concept of līlā, because Absolute for a true non-dualist, is always beyond all determinations or any sum of possible determinations. The Absolute is indeterminate in the sense that it cannot be limited by any determination. This by no means, means that the Absolute is 'incapable' of self-determination' and thus the world being not beyond the scope of total reality or Absolute, the world can even be rationally conceived as the result of Absolute's self-determination. The very conception of Absolute or Infinite Reality permits the capacity of self-determination and consequently no further 'why' can be asked regarding involution.

Again, according to the Śāṅkarite Advaita Vedānta, the world is an appearance and has no ontological independence apart from Brahman. From the ultimate standpoint there is only unity and no diversity and hence there is the little scope for reconciliation. The Śāṅkarite Advaita insists on asceticism and renunciation for availing the goal

of life. Sri Aurobindo's attitude towards life is different. It is not a stereotype. Its spectrum is wide. He has shown that the Supermind, the highest peaks of Consciousness, is also the power or divine energy which can be made to descend into the world of matter and transform it.

Sri Aurobindo also sees a conflict between intuitive apprehension and intellectual understanding in Śaṅkara's philosophy. Śaṅkara's idea of this world is based only on reason. There is also a stage when an individual have the perception of the transcendental Reality through intuition alone, but here there is no place for reasoning. When the Reality is known through intuition, there is the falsity of the phenomenal world and hence there is no scope for reason.<sup>12</sup> That is why, Sri Aurobindo remarks , " A theory of Māyā in the sense of illusion or the unreality of cosmic existence creates more difficulties than it solves ; it does not really solve the problem of existence , but rather renders it for ever insoluble."<sup>13</sup>

12. Sri Aurobindo in The Life Divine observes :

" In the philosophy of Śaṅkara , one feels the 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 intellectual reason regarding the world with a keen and vigorous rational intelligence " - The Life Divine, (Op. Cit. ) p. 461.

13. Ibid , p. 466.

Not only this, Sri Aurobindo's original contributions in the field of vedāntic study lies in the highlighting the principle of unity or harmony. In Śaṅkara's philosophy, the fact of becoming is declared as unreal, it is considered as a false appearance super-imposed on Brahman by Ignorance or Māyā . But Sri Aurobindo argues against this view. If Becoming is a false appearance super-imposed on Brahman it is not His becoming. To say that the becoming is an emanation from ignorance or it is on account of Māyā , observes Sri Aurobindo is a forced explanation. The Upaniṣadic word ' sambhūti ' signifies the fact of becoming. The Absolute is not only being, the Absolute is also becoming. Being is the background of the pure Existence, the becoming is also the absolute, the substantial forms of the absolute ' Sri Aurobindo said that Śaṅkara is right only from the mental or intellectual viewpoint. But mind is not the only means of knowing ; mind in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy stands for a level of evolutionary process. Above the level of mind, there is supermind where being and becoming are equally and simultaneously real.

Sri Aurobindo equally differs from Rāmānuja in his conception of reality. For Rāmānuja, Brahman is the substance ( prakṛti ) and the individual being ( Jīva ) and the word ( jaḡat ) are the adjectives ( prakāras ). For Sri Aurobindo, Rāmānuja is right so far as he sees the fact of becoming. The cit ( spirit ) of Rāmānuja is essentially the Brahman. Acit ( matter ) is also essentially Brahman. In view of this, according to Sri Aurobindo Rāmānuja is wrong in saying that God is ' citācitviśiṣṭa ' adjectivised by spirit and matter. For Sri Aurobindo , God himself cit-acit everything. The adjective is in essence substantive, the mode is substance. Acit

( matter ) of Rāmānuja is different from Brahman or cit. According to Sri Aurobindo, Rāmānuja could not see the basic identity of the three and in consequence for the sake of saving the omnipresence and perfection <sup>of</sup> Īśvara, viewed individual self or cit ( spirit ) and acit ( matter ) to be adjectival to Him. Thus Sri Aurobindo's originality lies in connecting the difficulties that are involved in both Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita views and in advocating a view according to which Absolute, the self and the world as one in three and three in one '. The classical dichotomy between matter and spirit does not appear in Sri Aurobindo's interpretation but both are synthesised. In his philosophy , there is no conflict between being and becoming due to the fact that " the Reality that is omnipresent is the base, support, stuff and mover of all the forms of the determinate existents. It is time, in time and timeless; it is space, in space and above space. It is cause, effect causation and beyond causation." <sup>14</sup> The mystery of the world is a mystery of contradiction between reason and suprarational. But Sri Aurobindo argues that if all is Brahman, then this contradiction is also Brahman. In the light of this, the world in the sense of illusion can not be accepted.

Again, unlike Śaṅkara, Sri Aurobindo believes that after the intuitive awareness of the God ( Divine ) the world i.e. the body, the ego would not be contradicted. However, Rāmānuja admits that the world is as Īśvara . But in Rāmānuja's philosophy, an individual though the part of Īśvara , can not be Infinite. But in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Non-dualism, the same individual being remains in the

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14. S. Chakraborty , The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo ( Delhi, sterling Pub. 1991 ) p. 12.

middle stage. In the same individual being " there is visva i.e. the whole world and visesatva or ego. In other words, a person who is performing this worldly works is at the same time related to the Divine ." <sup>15</sup> For Sri Aurobindo, there are immense possibilities in man, the same man would be transformed to superman. Here the topmost honour is offered to mankind.

However, there might be another criticism that a reflective mind endowed with positivistic and modern scientific moorings might find it difficult to accept Sri Aurobindo's view of evolution especially his view on the emergence of the Superman upon earth. Even agreeing with the basic principle of the cosmic evolution which is discovered by modern researches in physical and biological sciences, a modern man's scepticism regarding the wonderful future of mankind as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo , may not be abolished. But in our opinion, a thorough-going understanding of Sri Aurobindo's writings would at once come to our help. It can legitimately be argued that the future state of the world and the destiny of mankind must not be determined on the basis of the criterion which is current to-day. In the evolutionary changes , new principles will come into operation which can not be judged by the paradims which are in vogue at present. Sri Aurobindo deals with modern man's scepticism regarding the future possibility of man's transformation to Superman - and his obser<sup>v</sup>ation, in our opinion, would be an adequate reply in this respect. According to Sri Aurobindo a modern man " finds the same difficulty in accepting its practical realization here for its ultimate as would the

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15. R. Ghosh - The Religion of Man : In the light of Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath - The Advent , Vol. XLVII No. 3, August 1990, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

ancestral Ape if called upon to believe in himself as the future man." <sup>16</sup>

V. Deviation of modern thinkers from Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita views - Points of agreement as well as disagreement among themselves explained :

Now the conclusion the dissertation arrives at may be indicated at this stage. The main contention of whole bulk of the modern interpreters - whether academicians like Radhakrishnan or non academicians like Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo - of māyā is said to be an attempt to illuminate the age-old theme of ancient Indian Philosophy to clear some misunderstandings regarding some Indian Philosophical concepts i.e. māyā and the originality of modern thinkers lie mainly in matters of unbiased explanations. For Sri Aurobindo in particular, the Cosmic Energy assumes the form of matter with a view to exhibiting in isolated prominence, the substantiality of Absolute spirit and to give the spirit a formal basis of objective knowledge. Sri Aurobindo extends the boundary of metaphysical speculations of introducing the transformation of man into superman in his ' Integral Non-dualism ' . History will always remember that the interpretations of māyā lie in the hands of Swami Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo for two reasons - one is negative and the other is affirmative. In the former it denies the interpretation of māyā as meant in the sense of illusion by a few Vedāntins , in the latter it illuminates different other senses or usages of the word ' māyā ' that suit to retain the reality of the world around us. Reconciliation is also another salient feature of modern interpretations among different schools of Vedānta.

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16. The Life Divine ( Op. Cit ) p. 54.

The concept of māyā comes in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo in course of explaining different levels of terrestrial evolution or the future evolution of man to Divinity. Here it does not mean illusion. It appears in different lectures of Vivekananda in order to explain the relative status of worldly phenomenon. But it comes in the philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, not as a core concept but as a rejoinder to the misinterpretation of vedāntic teaching and thus for him māyā does not mean illusion. All of them differ from Śaṅkara in some way or other.

What might be the cause of this departure ? Our answer would run as follows : A philosopher cannot appear in a vacuum, his interpretations can not be indifferent to socio-cultural context, that is, scientific investigations, demands of the day and the dominant thought-currents of his earlier times. Philosophers are " both effects and causes : effects of their social circumstances and of the politics and institutions of their time, cause ( if they are fortunate ) of beliefs which mould the politics and institutions of later ages." <sup>17</sup>

This remark is also applicable with regard to the interpretations of māyā in the hands of different Indian philosophers. We have seen that the concept of māyā had its appearance in the philosophical literature of the Vedic-Upaniṣadic period. But it received various interpretations which change its connotations and significance in such multi-dimensional ways, which can not be harmonised without recognising the fact that every philosophical interpretation is an

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17. Russell : History of Western Philosophy, ( London , Unwin, 1988 edition ) Preface : p.7.

outcome of a particular time ' milieu ' be it Nāgārjuna, Gaudāpāda or Śāṅkara of the earlier period or be it assigned to Swami Vivekananda , S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo of later times. It is true that the thoughts and feelings that were common to the community or masses in vague and defused forms are being crystallised and concentrated in the philosophical writings of the age. In modern interpretation of the concept of māyā we see a peculiar genius for converting what it borrows from ancient Indian tradition and synthesising it with the existing philosophical demands. Looking in to the essential features of modern Indian philosophy thus we cannot close our sight to a position that has managed to break up the ancient tradition in many respects ( most probably on account of the tremendous scientific achievements and discoveries ), but has not found another sound alternative. In this ' milieu ', modern Indian philosophy began its journey in a self-created road by way of synthesising the traditional wisdom with the new socio-cultural context. Vivekananda, S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo - all these three celebrated modern Indian thinkers not only try to retain the metaphysical profundity of the traditional vedānta but also embrace a functional method of presentation of the theme in order to meet the needs of the age.

So far we have discussed the points of diparture of modern thinkers from traditional non-dualistic interpretations of the concept of māyā . Let us now try to see the points of affinities among these three thinkers appeared in modern time. First, Sri Aurobindo, a Yogi, S. Radhakrishnan, an academician cum statesman and Swami Vivekananda,

a karmayogī with vedāntic enlightenment - all have accepted the multiplicity ( nānātva ) of this world though there is one underlying unity in the multiplicity. To all of them the multiplicity of the world is as real as the Absolute Reality. All of them perhaps realised the importance of the multiplicity of the world for an intelligible explanation of the world, which goes against the basic thesis of Śaṅkara.

Secondly, these three modern thinkers have made an adventure to unite the whole world through self accepted in our Upaniṣadic tradition. All of them have agreed on the point that there is no other unifying principles excepting self which can bind the whole world together. The names of the Absolute may seem to be different to different thinkers i.e. God to Swami Vivekananda, Saccidānanda - Existence-Consciousness- Bliss to Sri Aurobindo and Absolute to S. Radhakrishnan, but all of them have admitted the existence of some Ultimate Power capable of uniting us.

Thirdly, these celebrated three modern thinkers of India have shown respect to human beings and human body. To all of them a human being is the abode of God or Absolute. As human being is the abode of Infinite, his body is also the substratum of the Infinite. In fact a man can be transformed to divinity according to them. Swami Vivekananda in his different speeches recognises the role of body in having spiritual and moral upliftment. For, having spiritual outlook, for social service etc. the role of body is highly significant. He dreamt a picture of ideal future of India with ' an Islamic body with vedāntic mind ' . Here ' Islamic body ' is to be taken as a metaphor ,

meaning ' a strong and stout body ' capable of doing social work. Keeping this aspect of social welfare etc. in view, he has shown his respectful gratitudes towards the doctrines of Buddha who has given preference to human welfare, but is silent about God. He aptly points out that service of humanity is the basic essentials for having a good life for which fitness of human body is highly required.

Sri Aurobindo also says that a man can change his body into Divinity after bringing the nucleus ( caityapurusa ) in front. For him the natural body consists of the Caityapurusa which is surrounded by the mental self ( manomayakoṣa ), vital self ( prāṇamayakoṣa ) and physical self ( annamaya koṣa ). As our Caityapurusa is covered by these selves it cannot give us the power of light so that we can see present, past and future. The process of Yoga can change this natural body, on account of which the Caityapurusa comes forward followed by mental, vital and physical selves. As it takes a leading part here, our mind is illumined by this. At this stage a man is transformed to Divinity or superman and body becomes a Divine body ( bhāgavati tanu ).

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also laid stress on the importance of body. He conceives reality in four different dimensions - The Absolute, the personal spirit , the world spirit and the world ( Virāt ). He gives equal poies or weight to each of the four aspects of reality. For him, the world is a testimony of the fact of affirmation of the Absolute. It is an wellknown fact that Radhakrishnan had great love for Buddha as well as for the Sāṅkhya dualism. In his poies of reality as virāt, he includes room for body. He accepts the importance

of sound health or ārogya as ' the basis of all our developments - ethical, artistic and spiritual ' reminds us the concept of Sāttvika śarīrā in the Bhagavadgītā .<sup>18</sup> Since the world is a testimony of the Absolute's manifestation, the individual soul in the body receives also importance in his hands. In the world we live in an atmosphere of inter-subjectivity. Unless we recognise others as the different poles of Reality's manifestation, we cannot explain the metaphysical justification of ethical issues in the society. In recognizing the existence of others, we are to recognise their bodily distinctness. But amidst all the distinctions, there is one underlying principle - namely the self, the same nature of all have been emphasised by S. Radhakrishnan.

The knowledge of the self for Radhakrishnan is non-sensuous immediate knowledge. It is intuitive knowledge that arises from an intimate fusion of mind with reality. Self-knowledge , for Radhakrishnan, is neither logical nor sensuous. It is on the otherhand, the presupposition of every other kind of knowledge. But world, to Radhakrishnan, is a process of different phases of divine activity and in this, matter, life and mind, are only different phases of evolutionary process. Even when dealing with the problem of personal immortality what he states clearly focuses on the importance of human body in the spiritual upliftment. To put it in his own words " we want the person to be preserved in his entirety, bodily presence as well as mind and purpose the house we can see and touch, and the dweller in the house. It will not satisfy us if the house is ruined and only the tenant alive ".<sup>19</sup>

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18. Occasional Speeches and Writings, Oct. 1952 - Feb. 1959 ( Delhi, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India 1960) p. 442.

19. An Idealistic view of Life , ( London, Unwin paperbacks 1980)p.224

Fourthly, all of them have shown their sincere respect and honour to the ancient Indian scriptures and Indian tradition. They tried to derive support from ' Śruti ' in favour of their philosophical position. In order to cope with their own theories, they have sometimes freshly interpreted Śruti. When the world is described as māyā none of the aforesaid thinkers mean it unreal. If it were so, how can we look upon it as a creative force? A creative force cannot certainly be absolutely zero. They interpreted māyā as a power or śakti of the Absolute ( Brahman ). Moreover, all of them believe in the gradual transformation of the soul from its limited finite state to the Infinite - ' Existence - Consciousness-Bliss. But this transformation is not the same that works ' through ' struggle for existence and competition ' as we find in Darwin. They rather speak of the potential divinity of man that determines the course of development. Though S. Radhakrishnan does not deal with such evolution in detail, the implication of his conception of Reality and various rejoinders to the interpretations of māyā in the sense of illusion on different occasions support the above contention. But Vivekananda on different occasional speeches and Sri Aurobindo in his work The Life Divine outlined the details of man's spiritual evolution and progress. With robust optimism, they speak of men's looking forward to the ' actualizing man's potential divinity. And for this, Swami Vivekananda advises to follow the dictum of Śruti - the path śravaṇa , manana and nididhyāsana , Sri Aurobindo refers to Yogic sādhanā .

But another question may be raised here. How can an innocent person believe in truth of this spiritual up-gradation? If an avowed sceptic, who does not believe in Śruti or tradition, questions about the validity of these, what would be the probable answers?

Vivekananda would reply this by saying that such a challenge may arise only from an excessive dose of solipsistic drugs of European culture that declares " I am truth ". On the contrary, if we do have a pondering on vedāntic teaching, we would have like Whitman say " All is truth ". To strengthen his thesis Vivekananda would refer to his master Sri Ramakrishna , who is taken to be an embodiment of mobile Śruti . Perhaps, on account of this, Vivekananda is often described as a commentator of what his Master realised and said, and as a testimony Vivekananda refers to Ramakrishna regarding spiritual matters.

If this challenge is thrown to Sri Aurobindo, he will show the truth of it ( śruti ) through Yogic experience. What Sri Aurobindo said has got its experimental side. When he has said that a man can be transformed into Divinity or Superman, he has given a scientific explanation of human body and its change. He has the idea of the importance of human body from the Tantra literature. According to Sri Aurobindo, a man having supermind can understand that Matter, Life and Mind are the involved ( or non-manifested ) forms of sat cit and ānanda respectively. Through supermind, an individual will know that like saccidānanda the world phenomenon consisting of matter, life and mind, is true. Śāṅkara considers this world as false ( mithyā ) as he arrived at the stage of a tattva as we get in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy may be considered as a tremendous contribution in modern Indian thought.

In S. Radhakrishnan's philosophy we do not get any experimental side, What he has said is purely dependent on Śruti . He has devel-

oped some independent arguments in favour of his thesis. But in his case we do not get the light of direct experience as we get in the case of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo. However, it is indeed true that while discussing the grades of knowledge, he places intuitive knowledge ( direct and immediate super-sensuous knowledge of reality or aparokṣānubhūti ) in the highest level.

#### VI. The charge " Does Vedānta make man immoral ? " examined :

Apart from the ' world negating ' attitude against Vedānta, there is another charge with regard to ethical relevance has been very aptly handled by modern Indian thinkers. There is a mistaken notion among many that vedānta is likely to make individuals immoral. It has been objected that if Brahman be the sole Reality and all distinctions are false, then the distinction between right and wrong, good and bad would be eliminated. In other words, the metaphysical identity of the finite and the Infinite leaves no room for ethics. And such a philosophic teaching is fatally dangerous for society.

But the modern interpreters like Swami Vivekananda , S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo would at once react to the above mentioned charge by saying that the metaphysical truth of ' identity without difference ' can not stand in the way of making distinction between right and wrong, good and bad in mundane level where the fact of duality in the form<sup>of</sup> becoming can not be ignored. The very nature of the mundane life is that it is an admixture of sadāsat - that is, it expresses relativity. In Vedāntic teaching , any action that helps one to realise one's essential identity with the Absolute is good

and that which stands in the way of realising this, is bad. It is indeed true that no one would object to admit the categories like truthfulness, charity, benevolence, self-control etc. under the first one ( good ) and falsehood, selfishness etc. under the second ( bad ). The goal of morality is to lift " oneself above one's individuality and become one with the universal spirit of the universe."<sup>20</sup> The liberated individual, for vedānta is the ideal of society. He does not work for himself but for others. Such an individual although is in the world, the world will not be within him, that is to say, he will be lifted above the worldly attachment of ' me and mine ' and treats others as himself. Such state of being is verily described in Advaita Vedānta as a state of jīvanmukti ( embodied release ).

A crucial question can be raised here. Is social service compatible with the state of Jīvanmukti ? In reply, it can be answered in the following way. A jīvanmukta according to the Advaitins, can do all actions ( Karmas ) out of his old habits generated through accumulated result of Karma. Hence, when he does work for Lokasamgraha ( welfare of human beings ) , he does automatically and can not have credit ( abhimāna ) of doing the same. According to Vivekananda , when an individual being renders his service for others, he is completely aware that he is doing this considering Divinity in man. He is a moral person. A moral person can not be an egoist. Egoism is not a satisfactory theory of moral obligation. For Vivekananda , the essential characteristics of morality is contained

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20. S. Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy , Vol. 2 ( Op. Cit. )  
p. 626.

in the thesis of the unity of the transcendental and the immanent spiritual principles as expressed in the Upanisadic dictum " Thou art that " ( ' Tad-asi ) . He considers the category of ' unselfishness ' as the criterion for distinguishing between moral and immoral. " That which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral."<sup>21</sup> In this connection, Vivekananda makes distinction between the tendency that leads to selfishness and the tendency that leads to unselfishness. The first one is called pravritti ( revolving towards ) and the second is nivritti. The former makes a person ' egoist ', the later truly moral. On account of the first tendency, a human being takes everything from everywhere and heaps it for satisfying his own sweet will. It functions with the awareness of ' I ' and ' mine ' and can not be the basis of morality. Nivritti , on the contrary, is the tendency that eliminates selfishness and helps a person to realise his own divine substance - that - the true nature of all same universal Self. This type of realisation at once vanguishes egoism. While speaking about morality, in the Jñāna - Yoga , Swamiji speaks about " the real man " and " apparent man ". The first one is a person who rose to the highest level of morality and realised his fundamental identity with the Absolute immanent in all. But " an apparent man " is one who has not realised it and he is a bound person limited by space-time and causation.<sup>22</sup> To cope with the demands of the societal atmosphere, Vivekananda even extends the connotation of the word ' mukti ' in the sense of freedom

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21. Karma-yoga in The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. 1 ( Op. Cit. 1962 ) p. 110.

22. Jñāna-Yoga in Ibid., Vol. 2 , ( Op. Cit. ) p. 78.

from One's own narrow outlook by way of becoming egoless, fearless and sensitive to others. In the opinion of Vivekananda, " All the great systems of ethics preach absolute unselfishness as the goal. Supposing this absolute unselfishness can be reached by a man, what becomes of him . . . . The little personality which he had before is now lost to him for ever, he has become infinite, and the attainment of this infinite expansion is indeed the goal of all religions and of all moral and philosophical teachings."<sup>23</sup> For Vivekananda, vedānta philosophy instead of blocking the room for morality, offers a rather more solid foundation for it. It is an admitted fact that morality demands that an individual should not be selfish or should not hurt others. But why should an individual be unselfish or should not hurt others ? Vivekananda discovers an answer in our advaitic teaching. Here we see that ' whosoever I hurt I hurt myself '. It teaches us not to care what becomes of me and mine, since ' the whole universe is mine '. Radhakrishnan devoted a research paper to give rational justification for meaningfulness of ethical demands of society even in Advaita Vedānta .<sup>24</sup>

VII. Affinity between the Vedāntic concept of māyā and the Philosophical background of modern physical science and  
Résumé :

Last but not least, the concept of māyā comes nearer to the philosophical background of contemporary physical science. In vedānta the fundamental search of reality takes man beyond the senses and sensual experience of world around us. Modern science seems to be a

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23. Karma-Yoga in Ibid ., Vol. I ( Op. Cit. ) p. 109.

24. The vedānta philosophy and the Doctrine of māyā . International Journal of Ethics , 24, 1914.

search for truth when it goes beyond technology, suggests a path that leads to the infinitely small, a step into the world of atoms. Modern atomic physicists have been dealing ' with a non-sensory experience of reality ' and frequently facing the antinomial aspects of such experience. The basic unity or oneness is no more a monopoly of Vedāntic teaching, it is also the revelation of modern researches in physical science. Like Vedānta, modern physics also feels the necessity of assuming consciousness for formulation the laws in a fully consistent way. " Wigner and other physicists have argued, however, that the implicit inclusion of human consciousness may be an essential aspect of future theories of matter ."<sup>25</sup> Studying the material world physical scientists have aware of the essential unity of all things and events. While the Vedāntins starting from the inner realm arrives at the fundamental unity, the modern science does the same from the outer universe. When Sir Arther Eddington in the Preface to his work, The philosophy of physical science ( P. IX ) says " I am not among those who think that, in the search for truth, all aspects of human experience are to be ignored, save those which are followed up in physical science ", - he comes very close to Advaitic enquiry of Reality.<sup>26</sup> Analysing its basic particles say atom, modern physics seems to arrive at a mental ground, an undifferentiated field of force which can not be characterised with certitude as mental or physical but from which ' arise all our physical conceptions '. It seems further to posit an impersonal and

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25. As quoted by Swami Ranganathananda in Science and Religion ( Mayavati & Advaita Ashrama 1982 ) p. 131.

26. Ibid

non-material character to the fundamental aspect of the world—the all-pervasive " that is in turn a lead into the unity of spirit amidst the sublimation of the world of multiplicity. Vivekananda in his speech at the Parliament of Religions, 1893 seems to hint at the possibility of kinship of modern science and Vedānta.<sup>27</sup>

To put it in short, what has been said in the whole bulk of this thesis is as follows :

That the concept of māyā has been used right from the Vedic-Upaniṣadic time down to modern. In the Advaitic system of Śaṅkara it accounts for the illusoriness of the world. As a result of this there are acquisitions of 'life negation', 'world negation' attitudes, there is the total neglect of what goes by the term ' material ' and there also arises the problem of morality that it falsifies the distinction between right and wrong etc.

The achievements of modern thinkers lie in the fact that they tried to reconcile traditional discords of different interpretations. For them, both spirit and matter are real and the interpretation of māyā in the sense of illusion is not justified . They gave due importance to the concept of body and explained the necessity of material elements in order to reach the Divinity. Out of love for the humanity in general, they tried to save the Upaniṣadic concept of Brahman as

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27. "Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherring in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light, from the latest conclusion of science ".  
 - The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda , Vol. I , 11th Edition, ( Op. Cit. ) p. 15.

the Absolute Reality as well as the multiplicity of the world. If everything is Brahman in whatever forms it appears, it is Brahman ( Bramhamayaṃ jagat ). Even for monistic conception of reality, they correctly point out that appearances are not necessarily illusions. All illusions are appearances but all appearances are not illusions. Again the monistic conception of reality does not negate the ethical relevance. In other words , all of them seem to give a metaphysical justification of ethical activities . Again, the variations of interpretation of modern thinkers from Śāṅkara, Rāmānuja as well as among themselves seems to be on account of a time milieu. And lastly, māyā in the sense of relativity seems to come nearer to the philosophical background of contemporary physical science.