

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MODERN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ARTS)

BY

Sanghamitra Dasgupta (Mohanta)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL
RAJA RAMMOHANPUR
DARJEELING, WEST BENGAL

INDIA

1994

STOCK TAKING - 2011

SI - 7111

Ref

181.4

8229e

112747

2 FEB 1958



Ref. No.....

Dated 26.9.1994.....199...

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Sm. Sanghamitra Dasgupta (Mohanta) has successfully completed her research project entitled : ' The concept of Māyā with special reference to modern Indian Philosophy '. The subject-matter of the thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to her, or, to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else. As I am satisfied with this research work which has not been submitted by her for any research degree in any other University, it may be submitted for evaluation for the award of the Ph.D. (Arts) degree of the University of North Bengal.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Raghunath Ghosh".

(DR. RAGHUNATH GHOSH)
Deptt. of Philosophy
University of North Bengal.

KEY TO TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

<i>Sounds like</i>	<i>Sounds like</i>
अ a o in son	ड d d
आ ā a in master	ढ dh dh in godhood
इ i i in if	ण n n in under
ई ī ee in feel	त t French t
उ u u in full	थ th th in thumb
ऊ ū oo in boot	द d th in then
ऋ r somewhat between r and ri	ध dh theh in breathe here
ए e a in evade	न n n
ऐ ai y in my	प p p
ओ o o in over	फ ph ph in loop-hole
औ au ow in now	ब b b
क k k	भ bh bh in abhor
ख kh ckh in blockhead	म m m
ग g g (hard)	य y
घ gh gh in log-hut	र r r
ङ ṅ ng	ल l l
च c ch (not k)	व v in avert
छ ch chh in catch him	श ś sh
ज j j	ष ṣ sh in show
झ jh dgeh in hedgehog	स s s
व ण̣ n (somewhat)	ह h h
ट t t	· ṁ m in hum
ठ th th in ant-hill	: ḥ half h in huḥ!

PREFACE :

P R E F A C E

The main objective of the present dissertation is to institute a critical exposition as well as comparative study of the concept of māyā¹ with special reference to three modern Indian Philosophers, namely Swami Vivekananda, S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo. By modern Indian philosophy, we mean the philosophical enterprise that is unwilling to break with the past and yet open to the good influences of the novel creeds. A modern thinker of Indian philosophy is said to be one who can stretch the sublime thoughts of old molds without breaking them. In short, a modernist both respects tradition and claims freedom from it. The traditional conception of philosophy in India which is ' Darśana ' denoting both ' vision ' and ' means of vision ' of what is real (Tattva), had its grounding in a sublime spiritual and metaphysical culture. Moreover, such a conception of philosophy had been gifted with a penetrating mystic insight and

-
1. It is to be noted here that instead of māyāvāda the concept 'māyā' has been used in the present thesis, because popularly māyāvāda stands for ' Śaṅkara's philosophy, according to which the world we see and we live in is nothing but false (mithyā) from the transcendental standpoint (pāramārthika dr̥ṣṭi). But here our chief purpose is to institute a comprehensive and critical analysis of the significance of the concept māyā not only in Śaṅkara's philosophy but with much more emphasis, in three modern, English-educated Indian philosophers' writings. It is indeed true that for the first time Śaṅkara with utmost zeal and intellectual acumen gifted with deep-rooted spiritual insight formulates a nondualistic philosophy that describes the world as false (mithyā) from transcendental perspective taking a peculiar but amazing recourse to the Vedic-Upaniṣadic concept of māyā. But in most of the ' modern ' writings,

intuitive vision of Truth or Reality. Evidently, unlike the West² where philosophy is mainly considered as a theoretical discipline of academicians, in the time-honoured philosophical tradition of India, Philosophy is not a 'mere intellectual apprehension of Reality' but also an intuitive realization of it that dominates the life of both individual as well as society. Indian philosophy is thus dominated by a consideration of practical necessity of understanding

the term māyā has been used as a real aspect of ^{the} highest Reality (Brahman) and thus for them the status of world is not the same as held by Śāṅkara.

Śāṅkara uses the term māyā to designate the status of the world. For Śāṅkara the world of multiplicity is false. When we cognise the multiplicity of world-show instead of One Brahman it is super-imposition (adhyāsa) . The world is not more than an illusion. But here we are interested to see how and in what background the concept of māyā had been used in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads , then in ^{the} Śāṅkarite Non-dualism and in the writings of modern Indian Thinkers. We are also interested to institute how the modern thinkers' handling of the concept of māyā differ from the older views and howfar their departure is radical. These are the reasons in support of the title of our thesis ' The Concept of Māyā ' instead of māyāvāda.

2. The term philosophy as it is popularly used in the western culture mainly signifies theoretical enterprise with hair-breathing logical analysis of Reality. For this reason, Hume advises us to understand his philosophy as academic philosophy and to leave room for faith so far as the life is concerned. We may remember here Hume's reply to Mr. Boyle, a boarder of the same lodging, at the death of Hume's mother :

how life can be best led.³ The aim of it is rather the satisfaction of an enlightened life with ' far sight, foresight and insight '.⁴ In modern Indian philosophical literature, which is dominated by scientific and secular outlook, we see a revival of the traditional wisdom in a new format in order to suit the changed socio-cultural situation. And as a result of this ungrudging sustained efforts of great thinkers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Professor K.C. Bhattacharyya, Sri Aurobindo, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and Dr. B.N. Seal to mention some of the most eminent

Boyle said : " My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to having thrown off the principles of religion, for if you had not, you would have been consoled with the firm belief that the good lady who was not only the best of mothers but the most pious of Christians, was completely happy in the realms of the just ". Hume replied : " Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet in other things I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine!"
 - John Hill Burton, Life and Correspondence of David Hume Vol. 1.,
 (Edinburgh 1846) p. 293.

3. The word ' practical ', as ^{it is} understood in Indian Philosophy is not *used* in the sense that truth is measured in terms of the practices as understood by the pragmatists like James, Schiller and others, but rather that truth is the most dependable guide for practice.
4. S.C. Chatterjee and D.M. Datta : An Introduction to Indian Philosophy (University of Calcutta , 1968) p. 12.

figures of modern Indian culture, Indian thought has got a mark of distinction in now-a-day's global cultural atmosphere.

Philosophy in its broadest sense refers to the conception of life and the world. But like all other historical events, philosophical conceptions are also said to be produced and moulded by religio-ethical conceptions of the prevailing space-time order on the one hand and scientific investigations on the other. No Philosopher can fight shy of the influence of the socio-cultural situation of his time altogether in shaping his philosophical conceptions. To put it otherwise, a philosopher can not appear in a vacuum, his interpretations can not be indifferent to socio-cultural context as well as scientific investigations of his time and the dominant thought currents of his earlier times. Perhaps seeing this, Bertrand Russell calls philosophers as " 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 ".⁵ This observation also seems to be relevant with regard to the thoughts of the philosophers , we are going to deal in this dissertation. We shall see that the concept of māyā had its appearance in the philosophical literature right from the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, but it received various interpretations and subsequently moulded its connotation and significance in such a variety of ways that we can not explain or reconcile these without recognising every philosophical interpretation as an outcome of a particular time's milieu, be it Nāgārjuna, Gauḍapāda or Śaṅkara of earlier

5. Russell - A History of Western Philosophy, (Unwin, London, 1988 ed.)
preface p.7.

period, or be it assigned to Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo. It is true that the thoughts and feelings that were common to the community or masses in vague and difused forms are being crystallised and concentrated in the philosophical writings of the age. There is also a peculiar genius of Indian Philosophical tradition for converting what it borrows and reconciliating it with the existing one. As a result of this in the Mahāyāna Buddhism we see that it was well-prepared to compromise with Brāhminical tradition as long as its ethical back-ground remained unaffected. Nāgārjuna's philosophical position was in line with Upaniṣadic philosophy. But when Mahāyāna Buddhists tradition lost its vitality, " the monasteries became rich centres of vested interests, and their discipline became lax. Magic and superstition crept into the popular forms of worship " ⁶. Śāṅkara (in the 8th century) who was often called a disguised Buddhist adopted the practice of Samgha in his conception of ' maṭha ' an organisations of sannyāsins . Interpreting the Upaniṣadic concept of māyā, Śāṅkara replaced gradually the blind forces by conscious and rational foundations and offered the prevalling ethical practices a new direction. We shall see ⁱⁿ the main body of our dissertation that Śāṅkara does not disregard the distinction between right and wrong in mundane level rather it offers a more solid rational foundations of ethical ideals. Coming down to the arrival of modern Indian Philosophy, 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,

6. Jawaharlal Nehru - The Discovery of India , Oxford, 1989, (9th impression , J.N. Memorial fund) p. 179.

modern Indian Philosophy started its walking in a self-created path by way of reconciliation of old tradition with the new world order.

There are many erroneous notions about Indian philosophy in the West.⁷ One of such prevalent notion is that an attitude of ' world-negation ' essentially characterises the dominant philosophical thinking in India. As such an attitude of worldnegation or illusoriness of the world we see around us, has been associated with the concept of māyā. This has tempted me to undertake a critical examination of the concept of māyā in ^{the} Samkarite philosophical treatises as well as its modern interpretations by Swami Vivekananda, S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo. It is hoped that such a study will serve as a preparation to the reader for an easier assimilation of the contemporary interpretations and applications of the concept of māyā and also to clarify the erroneous notion held by a few modern scholars both Western and

7. A large majority of professional philosophers in West very often makes sweeping remarks about Indian Philosophy. As an instance we may cite a passage from Anthony Flew : " Philosophy, as the word is understood here is concerned first, last and all the time with argument. It is incidentally, because most of what is labelled Eastern Philosophy is not so concerned - rather than any reason of European Parochialism - that this book draws no materials from any source east of Suez ".

- An Introduction to Philosophy (London, Thames & Hudson, 1971)
p. 36.

Even John Locke made many sweeping remarks on account of his erroneous conception about Indian Philosophy. Here is a passage from Locke :

" Had the poor Indian philosopher (who imagined that the earth also wanted something to bear it up) but thought of this word substance he needed not to have been at rouble to find an

Indian, who brand māyā as " illusion " in the sense of ' imagination ' or ' hallucination '.⁸ Our thesis will endeavour to show that the notion of māyā is a point around which the philosophical thought in India has ever revolved and it is a legitimate philosophical concept as to the reconciliation of the timeless perfection of Pure Being with the perpetual change or becoming of the world of phenomena. In the main texts of our dissertation the explication of māyā and its allied concepts will be dealt with in a comparative spirit mostly within Indian philosophical systems and especially with the traditional Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara.

As to the selection of the philosophies of Swami Vivekananda, S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo, it may be urged that the multi-dimensional aspect of the concept of māyā have been fruitfully explored with variation with the meaning of the term ' māyā as illusory ' by the aforesaid thinkers sometimes in building up their philosophical literature and sometime in occasional philosophical discourses in order to clear the misunderstandings of and mispresentations by others. Notwithstanding the fact that except S. Radhakrishnan, the other two - Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, are not academic philosophers, it goes

elephant to support it, and a tortoise to support his elephant, the word substance would have done it effectively ".

- An Essay Concerning Human Understanding , Book II, Ch. XIII, ed. A.C. Fraser, Oxford, 1984, p. 19.

8. Among the Indian thinkers, Prabhu Dutta Shastri had taken the word ' māyā ' in the sense of illusion. In this respect one may see his book : The Doctrine of Māyā in the Philosophy of Vedānta, (London, Luzac , 1911) p. 53.

without saying that all the three great sons of India have fruitfully shown the hollowness of the western allegation against the concept of māyā as ' illusion ' or ' world negating ' principle as it ^{is} wrongly understood in the west and in and through the writings of the aforesaid thinkers one may find an engaging, fruitful entry into the heart and mind of India. They weave the thread of māyā into a colourful fabric composed of many interesting ideas that reveal the practical insight into problems of troubled world pre-eminently torn by doubts and convictions of nullity. Among them, Sri Aurobindo is the most daring philosopher of modern India whose unfathomable intuitive penetration has produced a vast realm of philosophical literature on the science of life and " whose metaphysical explanation of the phenomenal world once translated into secular language will be seen to anticipate the postulates of physical science in this century and in the century to come." ⁹ Both Swami Vivekananda and S. Radhakrishnan were chosen for their luminous descriptions of an age-old explanation of the multiplicity and perplexity of the world in modern terms. In the last decade of nineteenth century Vivekananda first opens the close-door-thinking regarding India and her people in the West and in the major half of twentieth century Radhakrishnan has been playing the role of ' Liaison officer between East and West '. ¹⁰ He has successfully shown the bearing of ancient wisdom

9. R. Ryena : The Concept Māyā , (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962) p. XII.

10. C.E.M. Goad : Counter attacks from the East (George Allen and Union Ltd. London, 1933) p. 38.

of the east upon the perennial problems of existence.

It is, however, incumbent upon any researcher to take note of the legitimacy of the concept of māyā in Indian Philosophy. Our thesis will maintain that from the standpoint of modern interpretations in the hands of Swami Vivekananda, S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo, the interpretation of the concept of māyā in the sense of illusion, is in the end incorrect and untenable. The modern thinkers on the contrary, boldly maintain that in the Upaniṣads the term māyā was not used in the sense of illusion but in many other senses. In their tireless and sometimes tiresome analysis of the concept of māyā, the modern thinkers thus manage to put their hands on something deep and correct regarding philosophical import of the concept of māyā.

It is to be noted in this connection that our thesis is not confined to the expository survey only, it has been gifted with critical and comparative analysis so that the views developed here should not be vitiated by any kind of dogmatism. Keeping this in mind, we shall advance some arguments from our own standpoint, sometimes in criticising Śaṅkara's position and sometimes the positions of modern thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, S. Radhakrishnan etc. Though one may not agree with all these arguments to be forwarded in defence of our statement, one may find intellectual pleasure by going through the reasoning which may seem to be interesting, convincing and cogent to him. How far I am successful, may be judged by the scholars in the field ^{if} ~~but~~ my arguments, ^{feel} can be of interest to the general reader as well as to professionals. In this respect our thesis humbly claims to be open-ended one.

In the preparation of this thesis, I have made use of the original sanskrit texts mostly for first two chapters and the original writings of Swami Vivekananda , S. Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo for other chapters. And for this reason, I have included a large amount of commentarial material in original language. Besides, I have made use of the standard writings on the subject published in recent times. My indebtedness to the works consulted is, I trust, sufficiently indicated in the footnotes.

Apart from a long preface, our thesis will be divided into six broad chapters. The name of the broad chapters are as follows :

- CH - 1 - INTRODUCTORY : THE METAPHYSICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ.
- CH - 2 - THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN ^{THE} ŚĀMĀKARITE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA.
- CH - 3 - THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY.
- CH - 4 - THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN'S PHILOSOPHY.
- CH - 5 - THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY.
- CH - 6 - CONCLUSION AND CRITICAL REMARKS.

Again, each of the above chapters is divided into different sections and sub-sections which are given in detail in the text of the thesis.

Now I feel it a solemn duty to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Raghunath Ghosh, Reader in Philosophy, University of North Bengal under whose competent guidance and loving supervision this

research work was taken up, conducted and completed. I owe my debt to Pandit Paresh Chandra Pañcatīrtha of Dārikānāth Catuṣpāthi, Alipurduar, West Bengal, with whom I studied the Sanskrit texts. I also express my sense of gratitude to Swami Lokeswarananda of Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Calcutta, Swami Mukhyānanda of Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Professor Sushanta Sen, Deptt. of Philosophy & Religion, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan and Sri R. K. Acharyya, Reader in Philosophy, Ramkrishna Mahavidyalaya, Tripura with whom I had the opportunity to discuss some of the problems dealt with in this thesis and I was immensely benefited by their discussions. I am also grateful to all my past teachers in general (and to Professor Sibjiban Bhattacharyya in particular for his classes in Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark) for their initiation to grow my interests in the inherent richness of Indian Philosophy.

I am thankful to all the library-staff of Vivekananda College, Alipurduar College, Visva-Bharati, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Golpark, Ramakrishna Mahavidyalaya, Tripura, for extending their helps in different times and to the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, for granting me financial assistance under the Minor Research Project in Humanities and Social Sciences.

I also take the opportunity to thank all my colleagues and friends of Vivekananda College, Sri S.K. Bhowmik (Rtd. Principal of Alipurduar College) and Sri Kalyan Banerjee for their encouragements and helps.

I deem it a proud privilege to express my sense of gratitude to Professor Bimalendu Bhattacharyya and Professor (Mrs.) Anima Bhattacharyya, Deptt. of Geography, North Bengal University, Sri Rathin Sengupta and Mrs. Tapati Sengupta (my maternal uncle and aunt) for their constant inspirations and helps.

I find no appropriate words to express my indebtedness to my Parents, Parents-in-law for their blessings and encouragements.

I am also grateful to my husband, Dr. Dilip Kumar Mohanta for his critical reading of various portions of the first draft of the thesis and for helping me to refine my text throughout the entire writing.

Finally, I acknowledge the delightful distractions provided by my son, RK(রক) who suffered much on account of my off and on staying away from him for a quite long period.

Sanghamitra Dasgupta (Mohanta)

Department of Philosophy
University of North Bengal
Raja Rammohanpur
Darjeeling
November, 1994.

[Sanghamitra Dasgupta (Mohanta)]

C O N T E N T S

	Pages
PREFACE	1 - 12
CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTORY : METAPHYSICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR THE CONCEPT OF <u>MĀYĀ</u> :	17 - 40
a) The Origin and development of the concept of <u>māyā</u> in the Vedic-Upaniṣadic philosophical tradition :	
b) The Sāṃkhya view of <u>Prakṛti</u> :	
c) The Śākta-Tantra , Bengal Vaiṣṇava and Nāgārjunian views on allied concepts :	
CHAPTER 2 : THE CONCEPT OF <u>MĀYĀ</u> IN THE ŚĀṆKARITE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA :	41 - 108
I. Some Preliminary Observations about Advaita View of <u>māyā</u> with special reference to Gauḍapāda :	41 - 48
II. <u>Adhyāsa</u> (Super-imposition) in the Śāṃkarite Advaita Vedānta considered :	48 - 65
a) Non-advaita Views on ' Illusion ' examined :	
b) The Śāṃkarite view that ' anirvacanīya ' is the object of illusion ' explained :	
c) A table showing different theories of illusion at a glance :	

III.	<u>Ajñāna</u> as the material cause of illusory experience explained :	66 - 71
IV.	<u>Ajñāna</u> or <u>Māyā</u> as the ground of cosmic illusion explained :	71 - 75
V.	Rāmānuja's sevenfold objections against the Advaita view of <u>māyā</u> examined :	75 - 86
VI.	The status of <u>Jīva</u> (individualised soul) and <u>jagat</u> (the universe) in the Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta considered :	86 - 108
	a) <u>Avacchedavāda</u> and <u>Vivartavāda</u> explained :	
	b) The world is the projection of <u>māyā</u> : <u>Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda</u> considered :	
	c) The Three-tier hierarchy of existence considered :	
CHAPTER 3 : THE CONCEPT OF <u>MĀYĀ</u> IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY :		109 - 138
I.	Some Preliminary Observations about Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy :	109 - 114
II.	The primal thought of Sri Ramakrishna and its impact on Swami Vivekananda :	114 - 118
III.	God and Absolute in the thought of Vivekananda :	118 - 122

pages

IV.	The nature of the world - the cosmos :	122 - 129
V.	' <u>Māyā</u> is a statement of fact ' explained :	130 - 138
CHAPTER 4. :	THE CONCEPT OF <u>MĀYĀ</u> IN SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN'S PHILOSOPHY :	139 - 169
I.	Some Preliminary Observations about S. Radhakrishnan's Philosophy :	139 - 146
II.	Does <u>māyā</u> mean illusion ? :	146 - 151
III.	What does <u>māyā</u> mean ? :	151 - 169
	1) <u>Māyā</u> as an epistemological concept : An Inexplicable Mystery explained :	
	2) <u>Māyā</u> as a cosmogonic concept explained :	
	3) <u>Māyā</u> as an uniting concept explained :	
	4) <u>Māyā</u> as Primal Matter :	
	5) <u>Māyā</u> a Soteriological and Axiological concept explained :	
	6) <u>Māyā</u> as One-sided Dependence explained :	
CHAPTER 5. :	THE CONCEPT OF <u>MĀYĀ</u> IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY :	170 - 207
I.	Introductory Remarks about the Aim and Objective of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy :	170 - 173
II.	The Nature of Reality :	173 - 178
III.	The Theory of Evolution :	178 - 182

112747

E 24 FEB 1956

pages

IV.	The Status of the World :	182 - 186
V.	<u>Māyā</u> and Supermind :	186 - 197
VI.	Knowledge and Ignorance :	197 - 207
CHAPTER 6 :	CONCLUSION AND CRITICAL REMARKS :	208 - 252
I.	Summary of the Vedic-Upaniṣadic and the Advaita Views on <u>māyā</u> and their critical analysis :	208 - 213
II.	Swami Vivekananda's view on <u>māyā</u> evaluated :	214 - 221
III.	S. Radhakrishnan's view on <u>māyā</u> evaluated :	221 - 231
IV.	Sri Aurobindo's view on <u>māyā</u> evaluated :	231 - 238
V.	Deviation of modern thinkers from Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita views : Points of agreement as well as dis- agreement among themselves explained :	238 - 246
VI.	The charge " Does Vedānta make man immoral ? " examined :	246 - 249
VII.	Affinity between the Vedāntic concept of <u>māyā</u> and the philosophical background of modern physical science and Résumé :	249 - 252
BIBLIOGRAPHY 253 - 274

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTORY :

METAPHYSICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

FOR THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ :

I N T R O D U C T O R Y :

THE METAPHYSICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR
THE PROPAGATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ

Tracing of the origin and development of the concept of Māyā in
Vedic-Upaniṣadic philosophical tradition; Sāṃkhya view of Prakṛti,
Śākta-Tantra, Bengal-Vaiṣṇava and Nāgārjunian views on allied
concepts explained :

The concept of māyā is as old as the Vedas. The Vedas are said to be the oldest monument of philosophical literature of Indian culture and tradition. The main thoughts of the Upaniṣads which is otherwise known by the name vedānta, may be traced as a gradual development of the vedic tradition from Mantras and Brāhmaṇas through the Āraṇyakas. The key note of the Vedic mantras (hymns) is the spiritual monism and this monistic culture has been nourished and developed very elegantly with poetical zeal in the Upaniṣads.¹ The various gods of

-
1. The term 'henotheism' introduced by Max Müller as a transitional stage from polytheism to monotheism means ' belief in one only god'. Where polytheism believes ' the plurality of god ', monotheism says the Supreme can only be one. But Monism announces an one impersonal ruling over all power that is unmoving.

the Vedas are, as a matter of fact, manifestations of the Supreme God.² Thus ^{to} Rg-veda reads ' ekam sadviprā bahudhā vadanti - the One Real, the wise ^{men} declare as many³. There is the monistic thought from the first Mantra portion to the last Upaniṣadic portion⁴. But a very crucial question crops up here ; If the Reality is one, how do we explain the multiplicity of the universe ? The vedic saints and seers here take recourse to māyā - the magical power of God⁵. Māyā has different connotations in the various texts of India's sacred and philosophical literature. But the term māyā as the explanation of the visible universe is not a modern concept, but it can be found in its primitive meanings in the Rg-veda. The great philosophical tradition of Vedas and Upaniṣads have been the out come of the realisation of Saints and Seers with metaphysical depth and spiritual insight. Dominant philosophical attempts were made to disclose and discover the nature of what is real (tattva) and such an enterprise, very often centres around the self or ātman. The great upanishadic statement ' Ātmānam viddhi ' advises the individual to know his true essence, through the realisation of which one can attain the supreme

2. C.D. Sharma : A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1978) p.16

3. Rgveda : 1.164.46. (vol 1, Haraf Prakasani, Calcutta, 1976) p.219

4. "Pādo'hsya viṣvābhūtāni tripādasyāmṛtaṁ divi" - Ibid 10.90.3. vol 2, p.570

5. " Nāsadāsīno sadāsīttadānīm nāsīdrajo no vyomā paro yat /
Kiṁavarīvḥ kuha kasya śarmnambhaḥ kiṁāsīdgahanam gabhiram //
Ibid 10.129.1. (Of Cit) p.624.

knowledge, the centre of everything. In the R̥gveda we come across the concept of the eternal unity of Existence (Rta) which ' holds in its embrace all that has come to be, a unity in which the non-dynamic Reality which is frequently called Brahman is at once the imperishable spirit in man the ' Ātman, identical to the nature of Brahman'-Ātman , the first principle. This ' Ātman-Brahman orientation ' is one of the special marks of some schools of Indian philosophy that owe their origin and development from the Vedic-Upaniṣadic philosophical realises and this feature distinguishes them from the speculative philosophical novelties of western tradition. Many major philosophical schools of India believe that worldly man is under the nescience (avidyā) and as a result of it the individual takes the objects as real, permanent-which in fact is unreal, impermanent. It is common to all metaphysics that an underlying entity lay beneath the phenomenal world. From this metaphysical quest that soon runs into a division between phenomenal and trans-phenomenal existence, the concept of māyā has been treated with utmost care and importance in the philosophical discourses of the Vedas and Upaniṣads . It has been given a pivotal status despite different connotations in the various philosophical treatises of pre-Śaṅkara , Śaṅkara and post-Śaṅkara philosophical enterprises as well. Notwithstanding the variations in connotations, all texts and commentaries on the texts are agreed that māyā is concerned with the relationship of the phenomenal status of being and the transphenomenal Absolute. Most of the vedāntins-Śaṅkarite as well as Non-Śaṅkarite used it in order to give an explanation of the problem of other worldliness. The phenomenal character of the world is explained in Advaita Vedānta

by the word māyā. It is māyā for the vedāntins, that provides the adjuncts that by conditioning Brahman produces the occasion for the apparent creation of the world.

The ancient Vedas come to rest in the metaphysical searching—the searching for the true essence of self. From very early days as recorded in the Rgveda, human mind seeks to find the solution for his quest — ' where is the sun by night ? ' ' where go the stars by day ' ? " Why does the sun not fall down " ? ' What god shall we adore with our obtain ' ? ' Who has seen the first born ' ? The vedic Seers were convinced that there was something, which was not many but one, impersonal and Agni, Indra, Varuna were only the different forms and names of that Supreme. Several passages of Rgveda were devoted to depict the underlying unity that prevails under the apparent multiplicity of the world of phenomena. Agni, Yama and Mātariśvāh are the various names of the same Reality. The entire universe with all its varieties is ' the working of one mind the features of the same face, the blossom upon one tree '. The vedic texts which very often declare that ' the real is one ', use the term ' māyā ' in many hymns (Mantras). It is emphatically conceived as the power to transform oneself or assume strange forms.⁶ In the Rgveda⁷ it refers to a ' mysterious power ' a supernatural

6. Yadarastanvā vāvṛdhāno valānīndra pravruvāno janesu /
Māyetsā te yāni yuddhānyāhurnādya śatruṃ nanu purā vivitse //
Ibid (Of Cit) p. 513

7. Tadinvasya vṛvabhasya dhenorā nāmahirmarmire sakmyṃ goh /
Anyadnyadasuryaṃ vasānāni māyino mamire rūpasmin //
Ibid 3.38.7, vol I (Of Cit) p. 356.

power attributed to the gods. The term māyā is also praised as a ' world-sustaining power '. The famous verse of Rgveda thus reads:-

" Rūpaṁ rūpaṁ pratirūpo babhuva
tadasya rūpaṁ prāticakṣānya /
 Indro māyā-bhiḥ pururūpa iyate
yuktā hyasya harayaḥ sātā dasā //⁸

Lord Indra by his supernatural powers or māyā is said to assume various forms. Human beings with their discursive reason (avidyā) can not apprehend that forms of variety which are in fact the creation of māyā. In the same Rgveda the term māyā is sometimes used in the sense of cunning and deception, it is said to be the mightiest feature of Asuras, the Non-God, whom the devas (gods) wage in warfare. In the Atharvaveda māyā is described as something born out of māyā . The hymns of Rgveda that describe the fact of creation of the universe often declare that the universe with all its multiplicity is developed out of the ultimate One. The Vedic Seers term - that ultimate Reality ' Hiranyagarbha ' -" which lives in all things and moves them all the real one that blushes in the rose, breaks into beauty in the clouds, shows its strength in the storms and set the stars in the sky " ⁹. In the Vedas māyā in short is conceived as a governing principle and Ātman is described as Supreme Reality. Apart from the introduction of māyā the fact of Being on the one hand, and Becoming on the other would remain unexplained. Moreover, Ātman as the Supreme Reality and total non-being, the phenomenal existence that we come across in the Upaniṣads could not be posited with-

8. Ibid 6.47.18. vol 2, (Of Cit) p. 54

9. S. Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy vol 1, (George Allen & Unwin, 1989, Indian edition) p.95

out the concept of māyā .

The whole bulk of Vedas is classified into two heads - the sāṃhitā and the Brāhmaṇa - the former is concerned chiefly with Karmas or sacrifices and the later mostly with the self-knowledge or Brahmajñāna. The Upaniṣads which are otherwise known as Vedānta and considered as the nucleus of the most of religious-philosophical systems of India, are engaged to find out the essential nature of the First Principle of the Universe, the term ' Upaniṣad ' means the secret or 'rahasyam'. Deussen puts it as " certain mysterious words, expression and formulæ which are only intelligible to the initiated are described as Upaniṣad ".¹⁰ The Upaniṣad is concerned with the central reality which is absolute, infinite and pure delight . The doctrine of Upaniṣads has come to be known as Brahmavidyā since the sole pursuit of the whole Upaniṣads is to realise Brahman which is variously termed as ' Ātman; Puruṣa; , Īśa etc. " Brahma tallakṣyaṃ ucyate "¹¹

The Ultimate Truth, the Brahman has been described in the Upaniṣads in two ways. The Upaniṣads mention two aspects of Brahman-acosmic and cosmic , the manifest as well as the unmanifest. The one is devoid of attributes - Nirguṇa ; the other is endowed with them, known as Saguṇa Brahman. The passage of Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says:-

10. Philosophy of the Upaniṣads - (Tr. A.S. Geden, T and T Clark London, 1908) p.16

11. " Pranavo dhanuḥ śārohy ātmā , brahmatal lakṣyaṃ ucyate / aprāmattena veddhavyaṃ , śārvattanmayo bhavet " //

- Mundaka Upaniṣad - 2.2.4, (in S. Radhakrishnan's The

Principal Upaniṣads, George Allen & Unwin, Indian Edition 1989) p. 683.

" It is neither gross nor minute, neither short nor long ; it is neither dryness nor moisture, neither shadow nor darkness, neither air nor space, it is unattached, without savor or odor ; without eyes or ears, without vocal organ or mind, non-luminous, without vital force or mouth, without measure and without interior or exterior ".¹² Whereas in Chāndogya Upaniṣad we find the following statement :-"He who consists of mind, whose body is life, whose form is light , whose thought is truth, whose soul is space, containing all works, containing all desires containing all odours, containing all tastes, encompassing this whole world, being without speech and without concern".¹³ But these two aspects do not create any contradiction. The same reality is viewed from two points of view of the perceiver. Gobindo gopal Mukhopadhyaya says " the two pictures do not make reality dual but leave its unity unimpaired ".¹⁴ The Katha Upaniṣad clearly describes these two forms of Ātmā . " As the same

12. " Etad vai tad akṣaram asthūlam, ananu, ahrasvam, adīrgham, alohitam, asneham, acchāyam, atamaḥ, avāyva anākāśam, asaṅgam, arasam, agandham acakṣuṣkam, aśrotram, avāk, amanah, atejaskam, aparānam, amukham, amātram, abāhyam ; na tad aśnāti kiṁ cana, na tad aśnāti kaś cana.

- Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad - 3.8.8. (OP. Cit) p. 232.

13. Mano-mayaḥ prāṇa-sāriro bhā-rūpaḥ satya-saṅkalpa ākāśātmā sarva-karmā sarva-kāmaḥ sarva-gandhaḥ sarva-rasaḥ sarvam idam abhyātto ' vāky anādarah .

- Chāndogya Upaniṣad , 3.14.2. (Op. Cit) p. 391.

14. Studies in the Upaniṣads (Calcutta Sanskrit College Research Series No. IX , 1960) p. 61.

non-dual after it has entered the world, becomes different according to whatever it burns, so, also, the same non-dual Ātmān , dwelling in all beings, becomes different according to whatever it enters. And it exists also without ".¹⁵ Sri Ramkrishna compares the unconditioned Brahman to the infinite ocean and the conditioned Brahman to the blocked ice. Due to cool the ocean becomes solid ice; again the heat of the sun melts the ice into water. The transcendence of Brahman has no opposition to immanence. Transcendence signifies the real nature of the Absolute, whereas immanent is the view of Reality which is not direct.

The whole enquiry of the Upaniṣads centres round this Brahman or Ātmān, the inmost nature of all things. In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad we find that when Yājñavalka wished to go away into the forest he wanted to make a settlement for his two wives - Maitreyī and Kātyāyanī. But Maitreyī urged that whereas the worldly wealth did not give her immortality, she had no need for them. She was rather interested to know the path that leads her to immortality. And Yājñavalka started to pitch her about this Ātmān who is the only reality. The one Supreme consciousness splits up into jīva and Isvara , the subject and the object. This division arises because of the principle of māyā , it is within the womb of māyā . There are some who^{are} wrong in imagining that the doctrine of māyā is an invention of Śaṅkara , it is a later graft upon the old vedāntic

15. Agnir yathaiko bhuvanam pravisto rūpaṁ rūpaṁ prati-rūpo babhūva/
 Ekas tathā sarva-bhūtāntar-ātmā rūpaṁ rūpaṁ prati-rūpo bahiśca//
 - Kaṭha Upaniṣad - 2.2.9 (Op. Cit.) p. 639

philosophy and it does not find any place in the Upaniṣadic statement. The Upaniṣads emphatically declares the complete identity of jiva and Brahman. The great Upaniṣadic statement 'Thou art that' or 'I am Brahman' indicates that the Supreme self is identical with the individual self. This absolute identity comes to a liberated soul who is beyond māyā. It is through the instrumentation of māyā that this division occurs. The term māyā means which measures (miyate anayā). So it is māyā which measures the Absolute. It has a power of concealment, for which the Infinite is concealed and becomes finite. This concealment of Truth is referred in the Upaniṣads again and again. The Īśā Upaniṣad says that the face of truth is veiled by brilliant golden lid and it invokes the grace of the Divine to lift up the golden lid and make possible the perception of the Oneness of beings in the divine soul of the universe.¹⁶ The Upaniṣads tell us that the world where we live^{is} is the world of ignorance, darkness and death; it would be quite different from the world of reality. The famous prayer of Brahadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad thus reads -

From the unreal lead me to the real,

From darkness lead me to light

From death lead me to immortality.¹⁷

16. Hiraṇmayena pātreṇa satyasyāpihitam mukham /
Tattvam puṣannapāvṛṇu satyadharmāya dr̥ṣṭaye //
- Īśā Upaniṣad - 15 (Of Cit) p. 577.

17. " Asato mā sadgamaya, Tamāso mā jyotirgamaya Mṛtyormā amṛtam gamaya "

- Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad - 1.3.28 (Op. Cit.) p. 162

It signifies that there is a distinction between reality, light and death , i.e. a distinction between the reality and appearance, transcendental and phenomenal. There are many passages in the Upaniṣads where the world of duality is not regarded as absolute, but only seeming. The one and indivisible reality apparently splits itself. In the Brhdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad , which is one of the most significant of Upaniṣads, Yājñabalka teaches that the individual ātman is identical with the spirit in itself, the Supreme Reality - the Universal Ātman . The Upanaṣadic statement ' tattva-masi ' mentions this identity. It declares that the self within us and the Brahman are one and the same. In the opinion of seers " there is no diversity. He goes from death to death, who sees in it, as it were diversity ".¹⁸ The Katha Upaniṣad warns us not to find reality and certitude in the unrealities and uncertainties of the world, and tells us that how people abiding in avidyā , ignorance, thinking themselves blind men led by the blind.¹⁹ We are told in the Svetāśvatāra Upaniṣad that we get over the world illusion, visvamāyā nivṛtti by the worship of him, by union with him, by entering into his Being. It signifies that the world other

18. Manasaivānudraṣṭavyam , naiha nānāsti kiṃ cana /
mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyum āpnoti ya iha naneva paśyati //
- Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad - 4.4.19. (Of Cit.) p. 277

19. Dūramete viparīte visūcī avidyā yā ca vidyeta jñātā /
Vidyābhīpsinaṃ naciketasam manye, na tvā kāmā bahavo lolupantaḥ//
- Katha Upaniṣad - 1.2.4. (Op. Cit.) p. 609.

and

Avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ, svayam dhīrāḥ panditaṃ manyamānāḥ/
Dandramyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhāḥ, andhenaiva niyamānā yathāndhāḥ//
Ibid 1.2.5. (Op. Cit.) p. 609

than Him is māyā - which is not real. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad calls this māyā as the power of god - god is māyin. He is never separate from this power, but He is in eternal conjunction with it. Cognition, will and activity - all these are quite natural to God. The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad thus reads :-

Māyām tu prakṛtiṃ viddhi, māyinaṃ tu mahesvaram /
Tasyāvayava-bhūtais tu vyāptam sarvam idaṃ jagat //

- that is to say, prakṛti is māyā and the wielder of māyā is The Great Lord. The whole world is pervaded by beings that are part of the Lord.²⁰

It is stated in the Mundaka Upaniṣad that as a spider sends forth and draws in its thread, as herbs grow on the earth, as the hair develops on the head and body of a living person, so from the imperishable arises here the universe.²¹ He creates all, smells all ,

20. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.10. (Op. Cit.) P. 734.

21. Yathōrṇa-nābhiḥ sṛjate grṇate ca, yathā pṛthivyām ośadhayas sambhavanti /
Yatha sataḥ puruṣāt keśalomāni tathākṣarāt sambhavatiha viśvam //
- Mundaka Upaniṣad - 1.1.7.

and

Tapasā cīyate brahma tato'nnam abhijāyate annāt prāno manah ' satyam lokāḥ karmasu camṛtam - Mundaka Upaniṣad - 1.1.8.
(Op. Cit.) p. 673.

tastes all, he has pervaded all, silent and unaffected.²² It is indeed true that the Upaniṣads invoke that the world of perpetual procession of events that we perceive, feel and cognize must be ultimately identical with the Brahman. As from a lump of clay all that is made of clay is known, as from an ingot of black iron all that is made of black iron is known, so that when we achieve the supreme knowledge everything is achieved, we know everything. But only who is beyond the māyā knows the truth.

There is no doubt that the tendency of the Upaniṣadic Seers was to declare the complete identity of the Supreme Ātman and the ātman of individual. It is an admitted fact that the Upaniṣads were not written by one writer or by those philosophers who belong to the same school, but were composed by different Seers of different times. So the Upaniṣads do not represent a conceptual system of philosophy as visions of the Seers. When the world of diversity attracts their minds they declare that they all are Brahman. To put it in the words of Dr. S.N. Dasgupta - " They do not notice even the contradiction between the Brahman as unity and nature in its diversity ".²³ But we must remember that though there are different shades in the development of the conception of Brahman in the

22. " Sarva-karmā sarva-kāmah sarva-gandhah, sarva rasah sarvam idam abhyatto'vāky anādarah, eṣa ma ātmāntar hrdaye etad brahma, etaṁ itah pretyābhisambhavitāsmīti, yasya syāt addhā na vicikitsāstīti ha smāha sāndilyah, sāndilyah.
- Chāndogya Upaniṣad , 3.14.4. , [Ibid] p. 392.

23. A History of Indian Philosophy , vol I, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass , 1975) p. 48.

Upaniṣads, but there is no doubt that the strongest current of thought is that the Ātman or Brahman is the only reality and other than Brahman all the diversities are unreal. That thought as established by Śaṅkara in the later time, is the foundation of the doctrine of māyā which is rather hinted in the Upaniṣads.²⁴ And in the Vedic-Upaniṣadic tradition (as it is evident from the texts) at large the words māyā , avidyā , ajñāna are frequently used as very nearly or synonymous.²⁵ Other words like Adhyāsa, Mulāprakṛti, Tulāvidyā, Mulāvidyā etc. have been more recklessly used by later vedāntins. Śaṅkara himself has used all these as interchangeable terms. The concept of māyā , ajñāna is responsible for the cognition of multiplicity in the relative world.

24. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka states that there is in it no diversity. One sees diversity owing to ignorance.

Manasaivānudrastavyam , naiha nānāsti kiṃ cana mṛtyoh sa mṛtyum āpnoti yā iha nāneva paśyati. - 4.4.19. (Op.Cit) p.277.

25. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad also describe the same by the word māyā.

In the verses 9 and 10 of the chapter IV we thus read :

Chandāmsi yajñāḥ kratavo vratāni, bhūtaṃ bhavyaṃ yac ca vedā vadanti,

asmān māyī sṛjate viśvaṃ etat tasmīns cānyo māyayā sanniruddhaḥ . - verse No. - 9.

māyāṃ tu prakṛtiṃ viddhi, māyinaṃ tu maheśvaraṃ ;

tasyāvayava-bhūtais tu vyāptāṃ sarvaṃ idaṃ jagat . - Verse No.10 - (Op. Cit.) p. 734.

Here it is said that Brahman projects the universe through the power of its māyā . Again, in that universe Brahman (as the Jīva) is entangled through māyā . It is the very nature of illusion to give an appearance of reality to both the mirage and the phenomenal universe.

However, for the sake of comprehensive account of the evolution of the concept of māyā it is interesting to note how the allied concepts of māyā have been viewed in the non-vedic-upaniṣadic philosophies on the one hand, and in the different philosophical systems of non-saṁkarite orientation on the other. It is said that Gaudapāda, a south Indian teacher of Vedānta and the Grand teacher (Teachers' teacher) of Śaṁkārachāryya inherits many salient features of Buddhism in his interpretation of the Māndūkya Upaniṣad.²⁶ Although historical background of ' Śaṁkara's advaita vedānta may be traced in the philosophy of Gaudapāda, Śaṁkara's interpretation, as a matter of fact largely differs from Gaudapāda. Among the allied concepts of māyā, the samkhya view of Prakṛti, Tāntrika's conception of māyāśakti, Bengal vaiṣṇava's conception of māyā and Nāgārjuna's view of Samvṛtisatya are austoundingly remarkable.

In sharp contradistinction with Śaṁkara, the Sāmkhya system posits a ' cause of the world ' (allied concept of māyā of Advaita) in its doctrine of Prakṛti. Prakṛti and Puruṣa are the two ultimate realities recognised by the Sāmkhyas. Prakṛti is defined in the Sāmkhya system as ' the equilibrium of the three gunas ' - sattva,

Īśa Upaniṣad also describes ignorance (māyā, avidyā) in the following verses.

Anyad evāhur vidyayā anyad āhur avidyayā iti śuśrūma
dhīrānām ye nastad vicacakṣire. - verse No. 10

Vidyām cāvidyām ca yas tad vedobhyām saha
avidyayā mrtyum tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtam-asnute. - verse No. 11

Maitrī Upaniṣad 7.9 also states that by this (ignorance) men declare that the inauspicious is the auspicious, and that the auspicious is inauspicious, as if by enchantment they see the false as the true. - (Op. Cit.) p. 855.

rajas and tamas .²⁷ Puruṣa , according to the Sāṃkhyas, is intelligent but inactive while Prakṛti is active but non intelligent. For the evolution of the world the activity of Prakṛti must be guided by the intelligence of Puruṣa. Puruṣa by itself is neither mukta (liberated) nor baddha (bound). The knowledge of Puruṣa as distinct from Prakṛti leads to Kaivalya or liberation. Īśvarakriṣṇa describes Prakṛti as qualified by the words triguṇātmikā ,²⁸ avivekī , object of Puruṣa's enjoyment (viṣayah Sāmānya) non-intelligent (acetanaṃ) and always ready to produce the world of objects. Puruṣa , on the other hand, is just opposite to this.²⁹ Like the māyā of Śaṅkara, Prakṛti may be said indefinable,

26. See: 2 S.N.Dasgupta : A History of Indian Philosophy vol 1, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass 1975) p. 422.

27. Sattva-rajastamasām sāmāyāvasthā prakṛtiḥ prakṛtermahān mahato-
hṅkārōhṅkārāḥ Pañcatanmātranyubhayamindriyaṃ tanmātrebhyaḥ
sthūlabhutāni puruṣa iti Pañcavimsatigaṇaḥ. sūtra . 1.61.
- Sāṃkhya-Pravacanaśūtra of Kapila (Tr. by Upendranath
Mukhopadhyaya, Basumati corporation Ltd., N.D.) p. 35

28. The word ' guna ' has many senses, such as quality, essence etc. when we say the table is brown ' here ' brownness ' is a quality of the Table (substance) the word ' guna ' is understood in this sense in the Nyāya-vaīśeṣika philosophy. But in the Sāṃkhya philosophy, the word ' guna ' means ' essence ', the substance Prakṛti is nothing over and above these three gunas.

29. Trigūṇāmvivekī viṣayah sāmānyam acetanaṃ Prasavadharmī /
Vyaktam tathā Pradhānam Tadviparīta-stathaca pumān //
-- Sāṃkhyakārikā //

See. Sāṃkhyakārikā of Īśvarakriṣṇa ,
Ed. By Purnacandra Vedānta Cuncu - sāṅkhyabhusana. (West Bengal
State Book Board, 1983) p. 99.

since so long as the reals composite , it do not combine no demonstrable attribute belonged to it with which it could be defined. Māyā or ajñāna in Vedānta , is also described as ' Sadasadbhyāmanirvacaniyām triguṇātmakam Jñānavirodhī bhāvarūpaṁ yatkiñcidityi ' that is, ignorance is described as something positive though intelligible, which cannot be described either as being or non being which is made of three qualities and is antagonistic to knowledge.³⁰

From what has been explained above, it is evident that the advaitic concept of māyā or avidyā or ajñāna is essentially different from the Sāṅkhya view of Prakṛti. Unlike Advaita Vedānta the sāṅkhya advocates a dualistic system where Prakṛti is described as real. For the Sāṅkhya, when a person attains ' emancipation ' by cancelling the illusion arising from ' aviveka ' (non-discrimination) between puruṣa and Prakṛti, Prakṛti stands real as before, whereas in Śāṅkara's non-dualistic philosophy (Kevalādvaita) when a person is emancipated, māyā (avidyā , ajñāna as it is verily described in the Advaita texts) not only ceases to operate on him but is itself cancelled '. Both māyā and Prakṛti are described as ' triguṇātmikā ' (composed three attributes). But in Sāṅkara's system of māyā is wholly Brahman- dependent.

30. " It may be noted here that the word ' something ' (Yatkiñca) has a special significance. It is not used to denote its indescribable nature, nor its antagonism to knowledge and truth as these ideas have been well expressed by separate phrases. Its special significance is to posit ignorance as the source or cause of illusion " .

- Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda Yogindra , Tr. Swami Nikilananda, (Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1978) p. 21.

Apart from the superficial affinity of the Sāṃkhya view of Prakṛti with Śaṃkarite view of māyā, and the fundamental differences between the two, even some other vedāntic schools have also somewhat modified interpretations of the term māyā.³¹

'Śākta-Tantra' which sometimes goes by the name 'Practical Vedānta', deals with the concept of māyā not as unconscious (jada) as it is conceived by Śaṃkara, but as a real aspect of Śiva Himself.

The Tāntric culture tries to represent a wonderful synthesis of Being and Becoming by integral unification of Śiva and Śakti, the former stands for Being, the static aspect and the latter for the becoming, the changing aspect of the Ultimate Reality. Thus in the 'Tantra māyā-Śakti' is viewed as real and here lies a sharp difference of Tāntric interpretation of māyā from the Śaṃkarite interpretation as ' sadasadbhyāṃ anirvācya '.³² The world of multiplicity is false (mithyā) for Śaṃkara. On the contrary, Śākta-Tantra views the world as Śiva's experience and therefore it is real.³³ The

31. Since our main contention in this dissertation is not to show the differences of Śaṃkara's view from other traditional schools of Vedānta, but to show the differences of interpretations at the hands of modern Indian thinkers, we shall not go into detail of different philosophical systems' analysis of it. Here simply from expository standpoints, the concept has been introduced.

32. See: Sir John Woodreffe's : Shakti and Shakta (Fourth Ed. Ganesh and Co. Ltd., 1951) p. 71.

33. In sociological sense the Śiva is reportedly used as ' male ' and ' Śakti ' as female principle. This interpretation is not acceptable to the Tantric tradition. Śiva (Being) and Śakti (becoming) or māyāśakti are the real aspects of integral Reality. In Śākta Āgama , mind and matter are described as in the ourselves conscious but ' appear as unconscious by the

Tāntric culture assumes a real casual connection between Siva (Being) and jagat (world). We thus come across the simple grand dictum yadihasti, tad anyatra - what is here is there. And " the Ābhāsa of Tantra is a form of vivarta, distinguishable however from the vivarta of Māyāvāda . Because, in the Āgama whether Vai-
sṇava, Śaiva or Śākta, the effect is regarded as real whereas according to Śaṅkara, it is unreal".³⁴

Not to speak of Tantra only, even Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism, according to which the highest category is Kṛṣṇa (the Lord), describes māyā as one of the three śaktis (energies) of the Lord. Māyāśakti in Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, is an unconscious principle (īdā-
ravya) comprising the three attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas. Apart from the conception of three attributes, the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism has little affinity with Śaṅkara's view. For Śaṅkara ' sadasa-
danīrvācyā ' is māyā whereas Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism conceives māyā as a real power of the Lord (Bhagavān).³⁵ Besides, māyāśakti Kṛṣṇa has svarūpa-śakti and Ksetrejñāśakti , the former consisting of sandhini, saṁvit and Hīdīnī (roughly corresponds to Existence-
Consciousness and Bliss) and the later is the jīva. In Bengal Vaiṣṇavism of Chaitanya , which is also known as Acintya-bhedābh-
edavāda, the power through which God imanifests Himself as the

veiling power of consciousness itself as māyāśakti ' - (Niṣedha
vyāpāra rūpā Saktih) - For an elaborate discussion one may see Dr. U. Das' Sastramulak bhāratīya Saktisādhana ' (in Bengali), (Visva Bharati, pub. 1984.)

34. Woodroffe, Shakti and Shākta (ibid) p. 72.

35. Īśāvaimukhyena pihitam jīvaṁ māyā pidhatte, ghaṭenāvṛtam dipāṁ
Yathātama avṛnoti " - Tattva-Sandarbhā of Jiva Goswami ed.
Satyananda Goswami (Pub. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1985) p.71.

material world is called māyā-śakti and is regarded as God's external power (Bahiranga Śakti). According^{to} Jīva Goswami, the author of Satsandarbha and a noted commentator on Sri Rūpa Goswami's Ujjvalanilamani and Bhaktirasāmṛta - sindhu, the avidyā is constituted by separation from the Lord, and the liberation (mukti) can be achieved only through turning towards the Lord and this can be fulfilled by ' Prema ' and ' Bhakti ' - unconditional love of an devotion to Lord. Bāladeva Vidyābhūšana, a commentator of Jiva Goswami's ' Tattva-sandarbha ' is of the opinion that there is ' Anādi Bhagavad Vaimukhya ' in the first place and then māyā .³⁶ A.K. Raychoudhury summarises the main contention of the Bengal Vaisnavism regarding māyā in the following passage. " Māyā thus deludes the Jīva and causes his bondage, Māyā is real, so her delusion too is real. When jīva is released, māyā is not destroyed, Bhagavān knows and sees that māyā deludes the jīva. He out of generosity (dāksīnya) towards her, does not obstruct herein her work. She is only different.³⁷

36. It may be noted here that Śruti is regarded as the highest proof by Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta and Vaisnavism of Bengal. But by Śruti Śaṅkara understands the Vedas and Upaniṣads whereas Bengal Vaisnavism means Bhāgavata purāna. In the opinion of Jīva Goswami, the vedas are vast and some important portions of the vedas are not extended to us (lupta and gupta). Therefore it is not wise to rely upon them absolutely for authenticity. Kṛṣṇa daipāyana Vedavyāsa is famous, because for the first time he systematised the vedic hymns and summarised them. He also elucidated the inner philosophical relevance discovering the commentary on vedic hymns - that is the Bhāgavata. In view of this Jiva Goswami claims that Bhāgavata is the more authentic source where we can get the real philosophical teachings of Śruti. For Jiva Goswami, Bhāgavata is said to be the summary of the teachings of the vedas, the Puranas and Itihāsa (sarva pramāṇam cakravartī bhūtam).

37. A.K. Raychoudhury, the Doctrine of Māyā, (Calcutta , Dasgupta &

Among the non-vedic philosophical tradition such a concept of cosmic ignorance (avidyā) can be said to have gained a popular acceptance with Mahāyāna Buddhism in general and the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism in particular. Nāgārjuna a second century Buddhist dialectician ruthlessly exposes the absurdity of all metaphysical theories (d r s t i s) concerning the nature of Reality by bringing out blatant self-contradictions inherent in their nature. He tries to show that the real nature of objects can not be explained either in positive or negative terms. Our intellectual faculty which very often functions through concepts and discussive categories cannot reveal the true nature of reality. With the help of the most devastating dialectics (prasaṅga) ever written, he has shown the hollowness of the claim that everything has its own nature (sarvam svalakṣaṇam). For him even an worldly thing cannot be explained since, the concepts and categories that we use in describing the worldly things, are devoid of any intrinsic nature of their own (niḥsvabhāva). All things of the world are conditionally originated and last so long as the condition does not cease to exist. A thing can not be said to be either real or unreal or both real and unreal or neither real nor unreal. Reality is thus called śūnyatā .³⁸ Nāgārjuna's view is known as madhyama (middle) view, because it avoids the two extreme views of eternalism (Śāśvatavāda / Nityatāvāda) and Ucchedavāda or absolute

Co. 1950) p. 182.

One may also notice the following verse in this regard : "Tarya eva tatra karttṛtvam, Bhagavataḥ tatra udasinatvam "

- Tattvasandarbha. Ibid

38. Mādhyamika Kārikā Chapter : 24, Kārikā , 18.

unreality of things.³⁹ Samsāra or the world we see before us is for Nāgārjuna relative, conditional and dependent. This appearance of the world or samsāra is empirically true (samvrtisatya), the Śūnyata is the Absolute truth (pāramārthikasatya). In the Madhy-
āmika-Śāstra⁴⁰ we read thus :

Ye'nayor na vijānanti vibhāgaṃ satyayor dvayoh ;
te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gambhīraṃ buddha-śāsane.

(Mādhyamika kārikā 24/9)

Now if the reality of the world from transcendental standpoint can not be established, it could not have been originated and was never originated. This view of non-origination of the world and man (ajātivāda) was taken over by Gaudapāda, the first articulated Advaita philosopher before Saṃkara . A crucial question may be cropped up here : Is the world of appearance different from the ultimate Reality ? Here Nāgārjuna replies that we cannot describe it although it can be ' shown ' ; it is śūnya,⁴¹ inexplicable. But

39. Ibid

40. Buddha's teaching of Dharma depends on twofold nature of truth— one is empirical and the other is transcendental. The former is meant for the ordinary people and the latter for the enlightened. The former is only the stepping stone to the attainment of the latter. The transcendental truth which is otherwise known as nirvāna , śūnyatā etc. can be realised only as the denial of what is known in ordinary experience.

— See — Mādhyamika Śāstra , Chap. 24, Kārikās 8-9.

41. The word ' Śūnyatā ' when used in the context of the empirical or the mundance level of Reality, has two imports — one negative and the other positive. Negatively it means the denial of the uncritical acceptance of the unconditional nature of phenomenal things, and positively it means the revelation of the conditional, changing nature of objects. In fact the doctrine of śūnyatā

this does not construe the sense that the phenomenal (saṁvṛti) and the noumenal (asaṁvṛti or nirvāna) truths are two different entities set against each other .⁴² As Nāgārjuna puts it. " The one and the same Reality when viewed through the category of cause and conditions is called the world, and when these causes and conditions are disregarded, it is termed as Nirvāna".⁴³ All empirical determinations as they are all conditional and mutually dependent, are śūnya in the sense of having no intrinsic nature of their own (niḥsvabhāva). Eventually, the truth of all determinations lies in their indeterminations. But since indeterminateness is devoided of all determinations, it is also called śūnya . In Nāgārjuna's philosophy the word śūnya , māyā and avidyā ⁴⁴ are interchangeable.

in the mundane level (vyavahāra) is intended to provide a rational explanation of the fact of change or becoming as it is usually called in philosophical terminology - which is an obvious experienced fact of the phenomenal world.

-- For an elaborate analysis of concept of śūnyatā, one may see Dr. Sushanta Sen's article entitled " The concept of multidimensional Śūnyatā " (The Visva Bhārati Journal of Philosophy Vol. XXII , No. 2, 1985.

42. " Nirvāṇasya ca ya kotih sā kotih Samsārasya ca ".
- Nāgārjuna , Mādhyamika - Kārikā , ch. 25, Kārikā No. 20.
43. Ya ājavam javibhāva upādāya pratītya vā /
Sa apratītya anupādāya Nirvāṇam upadiśyate //
- Ibid , Kārikā No. 9
44. As regards the nature of avidyā (ignorance) " the Śāstra quotes a Śūtra, in which the Buddha tells that ignorance is not an entity (with an independent nature of its own) residing either inside or outside, it does not have a coming

The Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras⁴⁵ emphasise the teaching that the exact nature of things ever remains unchangeable, unaffected by our discursive and imaginative constructions and convey this teaching with the examples of illusion (māyā).

In the Laṅkāvatārasūtra the author, frequently uses the word māyā in order to explain the niḥsvabhāvatva (devoid of any self-essenceness) of the world. When he says : " Those who see that things exists or that they do not exist, do not see the truth, for all things are called māyā ; because they are unreal like lighting flash . . . because they are not born, yet appear to be and as the world is neither different from reality, nor identical with it, and though the world is treated as māyā, māyā is said to be not without reality ".⁴⁵ Besides Nāgārjuna, Aśvaghōṣa, a noted-Buddhist philosopher also uses the word māyā in the sense of magical power and some other Pali Buddhist writings also used the term ' māyā ' in the sense of ' deceitful conduct '.⁴⁶

At any rate, the introductory inclusion of the multidimension usage of the term māyā or ajñāna and its allied concepts from Vedic-Upaniṣadic literature to non-vedic Upaniṣadic philosophical treaties, shows that the concept itself is a very legitimate and

nor going, neither a birth nor an extinction, for there is not anywhere any definite entity with an ultimate nature of its own called ignorance ".

- Nāgārjuna's Philosophy as presented in the Mahāprajñā-Pāramitā Śāstra by K. Venkata Ramanan.

(The Harvard - Yenching Institute, Cambridge, 1966)

45. R. Reyna: The Doctrine of Māyā (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1962) p.11; See also : P.T. Raju : Idealistic Thought of India, (Cambridge Harvard University Press 1953) p. 243.

46. A. K. Raychoudhury : The Doctrine of Maya (Calcutta, Dasgupta, 1950) P. 105.

pivotal concept in the philosophical enterprise of India. Professor R.K. Sinari went a step further and says that māyā is central even in the day-to-day-struggles of the people in India.⁴⁷ Perhaps for this reason, this key concept has been used in different stipulated as well as reprotive senses at the hands of different philosophers from ancient days to modern times for the explanation of the existence of oneself and of the mysterious perplexity of the world around us.

47. " The notion of māyā is a point around which the philosophical thought in India has ever revolved. At some stage or other in his life, an Indian makes it a point to bruch aside a frustrating experience, a hopelessly incurable situation, even the day-to-day fact of existence, as perishable māyā. With the passage of time and with the ever stable impact of the Upanisadic Weltanschauung on the Indian mind, the word has acquired so popular and persuasive a usage that most often in the Indian's life , and literature both poverty and richness, sickness and health, failure and success, danger and safety, death and life, are banished indiscriminately as merely diverse facts of māyā ".

-- R.K. Sinari : The Structure of Indian Thought (Sringfielld, Illinois : Charless C. Thomas 1970) P. 131.

CHAPTER - 2
THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN THE
ŚĀMĀKARITE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA :

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN THE ŚĀM̐KARITE ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

I. Some Preliminary Observations about Advaita View of Māyā with special reference to Gaudapāda.

Gaudapāda, the teachers' teacher of Śāmkara recovered the creed of Advaita from the Vedas.¹ It is not needless to say that he revived the monistic tendencies of the Upaniṣads and exposed them in a very systematic manner. In his Māndukya Kārikā which is otherwise known as Āgama Śāstra or Gaudapāda Kārikā, he did not refer to any other writer of the monistic school. Śāmkara admits the credit of Gaudapāda, but not of Bādrāyana, in recovering the non-dualistic (advaita) creed from the Vedas. He expressed his regards to Gaudapāda at the conclusion of his commentary on Gaudapāda's Kārikā.²

1. Gaudapāda was said to be the teacher of Govindapāda and Śāmkara was recognised as the direct disciple of Govindapāda. Śāmkara's student Suresvara also refers to Gaudapāda as the " revered Gauda " in Naiṣkarmyasiddhi by saying, " Evam Gaudair Drāvidair nah pujaṇīyair arthah prabhaṣitaḥ ." Śāmkara was influenced by Gaudapāda's great wisdom. Dr. S.N. Dasgupta thinks that 'in order to be able to teach Śāmkara, Gaudapāda must have been living till at least 800 A.D.'

One may see in this respect, A History of Indian Philosophy (Motilal Banarsidass, 1975) , p. 423.

2. Śāmkarabhāṣya on Gaudapāda-Kārikā (Tr. Durgācaran Sāmkhya-Vedānta-Tīrtha ; Calcutta Deb Sahitya Kuthir , 1355 B.S.) p. 296.

Naturally any philosophical enterprise of Śaṅkara's Advaitism would presuppose its historical inheritance of Gauḍapāda's Advaitic expositions of the Vedic-Upaniṣadic philosophical aspects. It is indeed true that the growing spirit of mankind expresses itself through voices of philosophers and thinkers of all ages. As a genius with austere intellectualism, logical sublimity and relative freedom from theological obsessions, Śaṅkara seizes the opportunity of the hour and gives voice to the inarticulate Advaitic yearnings of the Vedas and Upaniṣads that for the first time receives the nurshing aid of labour room in the hands of Gauḍapāda . It can not, however, be denied that Gauḍapāda inherits many things from his earlier Buddhist philosophical literature particularly of Nāgārjuna's twofold distinction of truth. Śaṅkara on the other hand, emphasises on one of the fundamental tenets of Gauḍapāda's philosophy that the exact relation between the Ātman and the world is inexplicable (māyā) and develops his own interpretation of Advaitic literature with far reaching consequences to meet the challenges of the day he faces as a creative thinker. That is why, the following paragraphs will represent the fundamental tenets of Gauḍapāda's philosophy as an introductory to Śaṅkara's approach to the problem of māyā .

Gauḍapāda was a man of that time when Buddhism had been widely prevalent. Naturally his thoughts and ideas were enriched and nuri- shed by all the great Buddhist teachers like Aśvaghōṣa , Nāgārjuna, Aśaṅga and Vasubandhu . His Kārikā refers to the Yogācāra views and mentions the name of Buddha more than once.³

3. Ibid , 4.19.

Gaudapāda carries the non-relational teaching of Nāgārjuna. He was the first practical advocate of Idealism who stated that the awaking state and the dream state are in fact one. He denies that there is any creation at all. As an extreme non-dualist he admits only the reality of the non-dual and birthless Ātman. And in course of his philosophical scrutiny, Gaudapāda faces the problem of proper explanation of the exact relation between the Ātman (Reality) and jagat (the world). And it is precisely here he brings the word 'māyā'. However it is also true that a thorough going careful study of Gaudapāda-Kārikā reveals that the author was not very strict in using the word māyā. He uses the word māyā at least in three senses - that is to indicate (a) the inexplicability of human understanding of the relation between the Ātman and the universe, (b) māyā as the power of God (Īśvara) and (c) the apparent dreamlike nature of the universe. In view of this for understanding Gaudapāda's application of māyā we must investigate the nature of his idealism.

In the first chapter of his Kārikā he explains three apparent manifestation of the self - (i) the self as experiencer of external world in its awaking state (ii) the self as the experiencer of dream state and (iii) the self as the experiencer in deep sleep. In other words, the unborn non-dual Absolute for Gaudapāda, manifests itself in the macrocosm and the microcosm, the awaker, the dreamer and the sleeper. They all meet and disappear in the Turiya or the Fourth with which Gaudapāda identifies the Ātman or Brahman.

Gaudapāda carries such kind of idealism that declares that both the dream state and the awaking state are unreal on account of this fact that both of them are but illusory creation of the self.

In the dream state the things are witnessed internally. Similarly when we are awake the things that we perceive are also equally false from the fact that they are within. The external objects like the dream or a mirage are unreal and imagined by our mind.

To refute the reality of the world Gauḍapāda agrees with the Vijñānavādins. He says that the world cannot exist independently and outside of consciousness which is the only Reality. The ordinary people accept world's existence, because worldly things are perceived and they have practical utility. But, Gauḍapāda argues, from the ultimate standpoint, perception and practical utilisation are invalid, because we perceive both a magical elephant and dream objects and enjoy their utility.

In Turiya there is neither sleep nor dream. In dream we know otherwise and in deep sleep the seed of ignorance is present, though the duality is absent. When both of these states sleep and the positive wrong knowledge are transcended, the Turiya is reached. When the individual self is awakened from the beginningless ignorance, the sleepless, the dreamless, the Unborn Non-dual Absolute will be realised.

The fundamental doctrine of Gauḍapāda's philosophy is the doctrine of Non-origination (Ajativāda) which means that the world being only an appearance is in fact never created ; it implies, on the otherhand, that the Absolute being self-existent is unborn (aja). Gauḍapāda refutes all the present theories regarding the creation of the universe in a dialectical form which reminds us Nāgārjuna and establishes the view that non-origination is the highest truth, all

that is real is the non-dual Brahman who has no-origination.⁴ The Non-dual appears as dual only on account of illusion that takes place on account of ignorance. Our discursive intellect being essentially relational involves itself insoluble contradictions and thus cannot reveal the nature of reality.

In the third chapter of his kārikā Gauḍapāda describes the appearance as dreams and māyā (magic). All birth and death, origination and destruction, coming and going surrounding our lives are falsely imposed upon the truth which is immortal. The cause and effect are interdependent ; without one the other remains meaningless. Everything that appears as distinct and manifests outside is an imaginary production in association with the sense faculties. In dream the mind owing to illusion moves with the appearance of the subject and object. Similarly, in the awaking state owing to illusion or māyā the mind moves with the appearance of the two. This duality is perceived by the mind. There is no production at all. All production is falsely imposed upon consciousness. Duality is like a magical or illusory elephant (māyāhasti) . As the movement of burning charcoal is perceived as straight or curved, similarly the movement of

-
4. In his kārikā he refutes all the theories of causation or creation. He rejects the theories of two classes of disputants who hold that it is the existent that originates and who says that which originates is the non-existent. He argues that which is already existent cannot originate and that which is non-existent does not come into being. He says disputing thus, the followers of advaya assert absolute non-being (ajāti) . - The Kārikā reads thus :

Bhūtaṁ na jāyate kiñcidabhūtaṁ naiva jāyate /
Vivadantoḥdvayā hyevamajātiṁ khyāpayanti te //

consciousness appears as the subject and object. In reality the appearances are not real. They are produced from an imaginary relative point of view only, and therefore these things are after all not a real existence. They are all like shoots of magic coming out of seeds of magic. As in dreams or in magic men are born or die, so all are in appearances.

Gauḍapāda uses the word māyā in order to indicate the inexplicability of the relation between the Ātman and the world.⁵ In his view the world is comparable to a dream or an illusion. The apparent dreamlike character of the world is essentially indescribable or unthinkable either as existent or an non-existent, they can be called neither real nor unreal, neither existent nor non-existent. In the second chapter of his Kārikā he uses the term ' māyā ' as the wonderful poser of God through which the Subject or Ātman imagines himself as objects.⁶ It is the expression of God's

5. P. T. Raju argues that in denying the existence of the world is also denying māyā . He writes " Through the theory of māyā Vedānta establishes the non-dual Brahman as the sole Reality, but in Gauḍapāda this can be at least a provisional statement in order to explain the relationship between the relative and the Absolute, and since Gauḍapāda denies a relationship of any sort in the Absolute, he must therefore , from the standpoint of the highest truth deny māyā also ; for the highest truth for Gauḍapāda is that there is neither disappearance nor origination, neither difference nor non-difference, and in this view there can be no māyā " -

- Idealistic thought of India (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953) p. 154.

6. Kalpayatyātmanātmānamātmā devaḥ samāyayā /
Sa eva vudhyate bhedāniti Vedāntānīścayah //
- Gauḍapāda's Māṇḍukya Kārikā 2.41.12

power, the power of his māyā (svamāyayā). Gaudapāda describes māyā as a beginningless cosmic principle which hides Reality from the vision of man. Māyā becomes the svabhāva , or the nature of Ātman " inseparable from the ever luminous who is hidden by it." ⁷

For Gaudapāda from the standpoint of Brahman the multiple world has no reality. He tries to prove non-relation between appearance and Reality and he declares there is no possibility of appearance being either real or existent. His theory of No-origination is obviously borrowed from the Mādhyamika Kārikā of Nāgārjuna and the Lankāvatāra-sūtra of Vijñānavādins. Unlike Nāgārjuna Gaudapāda admits the absolutism which is the pivot of the Advaita philosophy. Later on this doctrine of Advaita was further developed in the hands of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara regards the world as only an appearance of Brahman from transcendental standpoint and when he faces the problem of explanation of the precise relation between the appearance and reality, he refers to māyā - that is inexplicable. Thus - Dr. Radhakrishnan, a noted interpreter of Indian philosophy, remarks :

" The Kārikā of Gaudapāda is an attempt to combine in one whole the negative logic of the Mādhyamikas with the positive idealism of the Upaniṣads. In Gaudapāda the negative tendency is more prominent than the positive. In Śaṅkara we have a more balanced outlook." ⁸

see : Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Gaudapāda Kārikā (Op. Cit.) p. 85.

7. Ibid, II, 19.

8. Indian Philosophy Vol. II - (Delhi, Oxford University, 1989) p. 465.

Śaṅkara explains the world phenomena as a case of super-imposition like the snake in the rope. Regarding this super-imposition there are different views in Indian philosophy. In Indian Philosophy there are six principal theories of the error of super-imposition known as Satkhyāti (object of error real or as is), Akhyāti (no error in simple judgment), Anyathākhyāti (errors only of misplacement or mistiming), Ātmakhyāti (object of error is the self), Asatkhyāti (object of error is non-existent). The first regards that no experience can ever be illusory. The second maintains that in erroneous experiences we fail to distinguish between consecutive presentations. According to the third , in error both the subject and the predicate are separately real, the presented identity between them is only unreal. The fourth holds that in error the internal object appears as external object. The fifth regards that error is the cognition of absolute non-existent. The last who maintains the anirvacanīya theory of error admits that error is neither real, nor unreal, nor both. In the erroneous perception ' It is silver ', Advaitins argue silver is not sat as it is bādhita (contradicted) by true knowledge attained subsequently ; nor as it asat or non-existent , as we perceive it in our illusory experiences.

However from another consideration, with the solitary exception of anirvacanīyavāda as propounded by the Advaitins and developed in different times, other five theories of illusory cognition may be classified under two broad heads. They may be described as satkhyātivāda and asatkhyātivāda . Under the first we may categorise the explanations of illusion by the followers of Rāmānuja, the Bhāttas and the Nyāya - Vaiśeṣikas. The second may include the Yogācāra and ^{the} Mādhyamika views. The basic datum of illusion for the first category is ' objectively real ' - 'the silver' of the erroneous cognition

is existent elsewhere. The second one, on the otherhand, denies the objectivity of the datum of illusion. It is precisely the sense in which the Mādhyamika's and the Vijñānavādins analysis of illusion may come under this class.

It is, therefore, interesting to have a bird's eye-view of different theories of illusory cognition as generally discussed in Indian Philosophy and to see how the Advaitins would criticise these views in order to make room for the anirvacanīyakhyaivāda. Here in doing so, we shall not enter into details of subtle politics of arguments and counter-arguments for the reason that our primary concern is not a critical exposition of the theories of illusion generally recognised in Indian Philosophy ; rather our's is the business of arriving at anirvacanīya khyātivāda as a preface for analysing the concept of māyā in Advaita Vedānta.

It is to be noted in this connection that the Advaitic approach that began with Gauḍapāda and matured in a tremendously technical form in the hands of Śaṅkara, was severely criticised by others' in later days. A thorough-going reading of the history of Indian philosophy would reveal that again and again the followers of Advaita Vedānta revisited the philosophical circle in order to meet the criticisms usually put forwarded by opponents and tried to re-establish the basic Advaitic position with scintillating brilliance in their dialectical argumentations. Rāmānuja who lived long after Śaṅkara had the opportunity to criticise Śaṅkara's advaitic philosophical position in a devastating way. Again, the followers of Śaṅkara namely Śriharṣa , Citsukha and a few others criticised Rāmānuja's explanation of illusion and with ruthless dialectical skill, they managed

to leave room for advaitic interpretation. Keeping this in mind, that is, the total advaitic interpretations' that continued from the Gauḍapāda-Śaṅkara approach, we shall discuss the different explanations of illusory cognitions and possible advaitic rejoinders to them. That is precisely the reason that our critical exposition of the theories of illusion begins with Rāmānuja's view on illusion despite the fact that he flourished as a glorious philosophical figure in Indian philosophy even after Śaṅkara.

(a) The Non-advaita Views on Illusion examined .

Rāmānuja says that if anything is a piece of knowledge, it is necessarily true, because ' knowledge proper ' (pramā) always corresponds to its objects . Then a question arises : why does there occur the erroneous or illusory cognition ? This amounts to ask how Rāmānuja would account for illusion. To such questions, Rāmānuja would reply by saying that knowledge - proper (pramā) should not only correspond to the external reality but should also satisfy our pragmatic needs. The aspect of knowledge also implies that it must be common to the experience of all men. In the case of illusory cognition of ' conch-shell', the memory of 'silver' cognised before is imposed on the ' this ' which is cognised at the time of illusory cognition and this is on account of the defects of the visual organs. This in turn shows that in illusion, there can be no cancellation of the elements perceived before but only implication and consequential activities are arrested. In other words, for Rāmānuja and his followers the error consists in the failure of the objects to satisfy our pragmatic needs.

But against this contention, the later advaitins argue that Rāmānuja's theory stands on a misunderstanding of the principle of quintuplication. The principle does not mean that the gross elements

or their evolutes were mixed up with one another. If the shell possesses the ingredients of silver, the shell can never be transformed into ashes and reduced to a liquidified state as ' silver '. ' Snake-hood ' can inhere only in snake, but not in its formative elements. The author of ' Advaitamodah ' thus asks Viśiṣṭādvaitins to explain why we see a piece of ' silver ' in the ' shell ' on the beach and why not we do see a piece of thing which is silvery-coloured, i.e. a piece of glass ?⁹ The advaitins further argue that if the conch were really painted yellow by sun-rays coming from the jaundiced eyes, it should have been seen yellow by other persons also.

Next comes the Prabhākara's theory of illusory cognition for consideration. This theory is popularly known as ' akhyātivāda ', according to which the so-called error is due to non-discrimination of different cognitions and of different contents. When we say 'this is silver ' instead of ' shell ' we cannot apprehend the distinction between two truly separate cases of cognitions - perceptual and memory, but we tend to treat them as one unitary knowledge in our verbal actions, speech, behaviours etc. and this leads us to the phenomenon of unsuccessful inclination. Correction of the so-called illusory cognition denies neither the presentation of ' this ' nor ' the recollection of silver '. The contents of these cognition are not also rejected . For Prabhākara, if anything is a piece of knowledge, it is necessarily true. Only on account of a lapse of memory

9. For details of the advaitins' arguments against the position of Rāmānuja and his followers one may see Vāsudeva Śāstri's Advaitamodah , (H.N. Apte, ed. Anandasrama Sanskrit Series No. 84, Poona, 1940) p. 146.

(smṛti pramoṣa) on its effect, non-discrimination (vivekāgraha), we cognise ' silver in case of shell '. Here the distinction between the perceived and the remembered objects is not apprehended or cognised.

Vācaspati objects that the Prabhākara's analysis of illusion leads to the undesirable position of some ludicrous extremity (atīvyākhyāna) or to coin a word from Prof. B.K. Matilal , we may say that it is ' guilty of overskill '.¹⁰ It is too extreme to analyse illusion into two distinct cognitions like memory and perception instead of an unitary perceptual mode of awareness. The Nyāya critique would point out that the Prabhākara unnecessarily made the explanation of illusion more complex, the Prabhākara fails to see the fact that in illusory cognition our action is prompted by our lack of awareness of the distinction of the different cognitions. Again, this view also fails to account for the origin of human activity in order to achieve the object grasped in illusory cognition. Here an Advaita Vedāntist joins hand with the Nyāya-vaiśeṣika and argues that the Prabhākara's explanation contradicts our positive normal actions. Vācaspati thus urges that " a conscious being does not act out of lack of awareness, but out of awareness."¹¹ In the Bhāmati , Vācaspati argues in favour of the advaita view. He urges that if the non-apprehension of difference of contents and of cognitions is admitted as the cause of illusory cognition as held by the Prabhākara, then it would be equally possible to argue that it is on account of the non-apprehension of the ultimate ' non-difference ' ,

10. Perception (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986) p. 196.

11. Tātparya-tīkā (ed. R.S. Dravid, Varanasi, 1925) p. 163,

of the said two items. On this ground, Vācaspati prefers the advaita theory according to which error is due to the failure of realisation that everything is, in the last analysis, Brahman.¹² Pārthasārathi Miśra refutes Prabhākara's contention that non-cognition of difference between two kinds of awareness, that is perceptual and memory, as the cause of illusory cognition. He points out that we can be in error, though we may discriminate two objects of cognitions. For instance, we may know the difference of north, south, east and west, still we may mistake about which direction we are facing now. Vivaraṇa also argues that in memory only the object is remembered, its previous knownness is never remembered along with the object. In such a case, the non-apprehension of difference of cognitions, memory element cannot be lapsed as held by the Prabhākara.¹³ The Advaita Vedānta thus suggests that instead of admitting the non-cognition of two different kinds of cognition's nature, it is better to admit that the failure to grasp the ultimate non-difference of apparent diversified contents of cognitions as the cause of error.

The Nyāya offers another alternative . The Nyāya theory of illusion is known by the name ' anyathākhyātivāda ', according to which an illusory cognition is presentational in nature and has some basis in facts. But it is erroneous because here the facts are ' misplaced ' and ' misrelated ' . When we cognise ' silver in shell ' the

12. Prabhākara's view has been severely criticised by Pārthasārathi Miśra in his Śāstra-dīpikā (Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. 89, Baroda, Oriental Institute, 1940) and by Nrsimhasrama in Advaitadīpikā (Kasi , Lazarus & Co., N.Delhi)

13. Vivaraṇa : Vivaraṇam (pañcapādikā-vyākhyānam) of Prakāśātman with Tatparyadīpikā of Citsukha , (Govt. Oriental series, No. 155, Madras, 1958) p. 24.

Nyāya observes, on account of similarity between ' silver ' and ' conch-shell ', the past experience or memory revives. The revived memory comes into contact with the visual organ ' non-physically ' which is technically known as ' Jñānalakṣaṇa pratyāsatti '. Sensory illusion is thus a complicated perception where the visual organ perceives ' this ' through ordinary contact (laukika sannikarṣa) and it perceives silver by means of extra-ordinary relation (alaukika sannikarṣa). That is how we perceive that the Yonder object is otherwise manifested as ' silver '. Hence " error lies not in the presentations concerned in the perception but in the determination of one presentation by another given through association and memory (jātyasaṁskārāt). And since this determination results in a judgment of the object as something other than what it is, the Nyāya theory of error is called anyathākhyāti or viparītakhyāti.¹⁴

Against the Nyāya theory of illusion the Advaitin would argue that it is not intelligible in the Nyāya contention how the silver which exists elsewhere can be in contact with the visual organ. But this contact (sannikarṣa) is necessary for the perception of silver as an actuality before us and not a case of memory alone. The Nyāya speaks of extra-ordinary contact of jñānalakṣaṇa in this respect. Here the Advaitins would at once object that such an interpretation will make the Nyāya contention of inference itself redundant or unnecessary.¹⁵ In case of distant object, say silver, or its

14. S.C. Chatterjee : The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge , (University of Calcutta , 2nd ed. 1965) p. 36.

15. For details one may see Bhāva-dīpikā in Vedāntadarśana (Śārīraka-Bhāṣya), (Beng. tr. & annotation by Swami Visvarupananda, Udbodhan, Calcutta , 1993) p. 38.

universal 'silverness ' cannot be apprehended in the yonder object ' shell ', because our visual organ cannot have a contact with the remote object . It cannot be said to be yielded by jñāna-lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa , because in that case it would equally be objected that the purpose of inference would be served by it. But in the Nyāya inference plays a vital role as an independent source (kāraṇa) of valid cognition.

In view of this, the Advaitins say that in illusion an ' expressible silver ' is cognised. Here the content of cognition has reality for the time being . It is an object directly perceived by the senses and thus it cannot be said to have a non-entity. On the otherhand, it is not real for all time, because in that case it could not have been cancelled when the shell is known. The Advaitins would say here that the ' silver ' cognised in illusion , has no real existence anywhere but has an apparent reality. In other words, its exact status is unspeakable.

The Advaitins also criticise the Buddhist's analysis of illusory cognition. For the Yogācāra Buddhists who advocate Ātmakhyāti-vāda , our illusory cognition projects its own form as an external object. The Yogācāra holds that in illusion we cognise the internal object as external, the mental as extramental . According to this view, the illusory object is the creation of innate pre-disposition (vāsanā). The piece of silver that is mis-apprehended as nothing but a part of my awareness. In other words, cognition and its objects are never cognised distinctly. In illusion, the entire content is super-imposed on the unreal extra-mental object which is the product of beginningless avidyā (ignorance).

It is usually objected against the Yogācāra view that if in an illusory cognition of ' silver in shell ' , the silver also be a form of cognition, then there would be no logical bar to have cognition of the kind, not as ' this is silver ' but ' I am silver ' because the self is but a form of consciousness.

Again, for Yogācāras, the innate pre-disposition is said to be the cause of illusion. Here the Advaitins may raise a question : Is it done by defective cognition or some other cognition ? If it is said that the silver is caused by the non-defective cognition, then it is to be perceived by all, as a jar or a table etc., because they are common to everybody's perception. The revealing silver cannot be regarded erroneous, since being the cause of its cogniser, it possesses some practical efficacy (arthakriyākāritva) which, according to the Buddhist, is the mark of a real object. If the Yogācāras would further argue that the illusory cognition is caused not by silver but by something else, then the false silver cannot be apprehended at all, because in the cognition of an object the cognition is caused by that very object. Thus for Advaitins , Vijñānavādins cannot explain the revelation of the false silver.¹⁶

The Mādhyamika Buddhist advances another theory of illusion usually known as Asatkhyātivāda . It maintains that the erroneous cognition of silver is absolutely unreal (asat) and therefore illusion is a cognition of the non-existent. The causal factor of cognition that reveals the unreal silver is called ignorance (avidyā). Under the influence of it (avidyā), the form of previous

16. A.K. Ray Choudhury has elaborated the arguments of the Advaitists in ' The Doctrine of Māyā (Calcutta, Dasgupta & Co. 1952) p. 40.

impression (samskāra) becomes detached from the state of consciousness and places it in the grip of objectivity. Illusory cognition, for the Mādhyamika, points to ' pure nullity ' that is applicable in cases of subject-predicate relation as well as of the content of such relation.

There are many arguments that have been levelled against the Mādhyamika position with regard to the status of illusory cognition. Apart from these, from the Advaita view point , it may be argued that there is no adequate ground for maintaining the Mādhyamika contention that the very object of illusion is a sheer non-entity. The Advaitins have their own explanation. For them, the prātibhāsika object appears in illusion though it were functionally (vyavahārika) real. It is only functionally or phenomenally real because the subsequent sublating cognition conceals its apparent reality. Thus Madhusudan Saraswati argues that the illusory cognition cannot be justified until and unless we assume the objectivity of the content of the said cognition.¹⁷ " A purely non-existent object cannot be perceived. The objectivity of the false however, does not vouch for its phenomenal reality. It has a different being of its own. Illusory cognition takes it to be phenomenally real. Correction proves that it is not a phenomenal object. The illusory content has a positive being which is not on a par with that of a phenomenal object. Error is due to the ignorance (ajñāna) of the substratum of illusion. Illusion ceases only when substratum is directly experienced. Thus with the cancellation of ajñāna, its evolutes, which appeared in illusion is also negated ", the Advaitins would observe.¹⁸

17. Advaitasiddhi (Bombay, Nirnarya Sagar Press, 1917) p. 648.

18. A.K. Ray Choudhury : The Doctrine of Māyā (Op. Cit.) p. 44.

(b) The Śāṃkrite view that 'anirvacanīya is the object of illusion ' explained :

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that, though the Advaitin is in agreement to the fact that what is revealed as the object of cognition is not asat (non-existent) but it does not mean that he is agreed with the Bhāttas and the Naiyāyikas in holding that the silver seen in illusion is sat (existent). The Advaitin suggests that in order to justify the appearance as well as the sublation of the illusory content, we have to admit that it should be uncategorizable or anīrvacaniya by the ordinary notion of the existence and non-existence (bhāva and abhāva). Let us now see what does the Advaitin really mean by anirvacaniya . The term 'anirvacaniya ' etymologically means not determinable. The word may be applied to an object which changes from time to time. The Advaitin would say that the ' silver ' is neither sat (existent) , as it is known as non-existent by the vādhaka jñāna (correcting experience) nor 'asat ' (non-existent) as it is apprehended as such before its sublation by the subsequent knowledge. Therefore, an object of empirical error is seriously present which is accepted as a concrete presence so long the illusion or brahma lasts. This theory presupposes the theory of sattā according to which the only absolute reality is the Brahman or Consciousness perse and that of the asat as is envisaged in the yoga theory of vikalpa .¹⁹The

19. Śābdajñānānupātti vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ - Yogasūtra 1/9,
- Yoga-sūtras of Patāñjali with Bhāṣya tr. Purnacandra
Vedāntacuncu (Sanskrit Book Depository, Calcutta, 1907)

Advaitin holds that the object which is cognised in space and time is the object of cognition and of negation as well. The real Brahman which is eternal and timeless and the purely non-existent unreal objects are totally devoid of spatio-temporal character. But the anīrvācya has the spatio-temporal character. Therefore, it can be cognised as well as rejected. As the illusory object is something other than absolute existence and absolute non-existence, it is relative existence and relative non-existence.²⁰ The absolutely non-existent objects are neither absolutely existent, nor relatively existent, nor relatively non-existent. The absolute non-existent (atyantāsāt) is that which is capable of being negated for all time - past, present and future but is not identifiable with any existent. But an indeterminable is also capable of being negated for all time - past, present and future, though it can be identifiable with an existent something in some substratum at sometime.²¹

Śamkara, the illustrious protagonist of the Advaita school of Vedānta offers his own definition of adhyāsa , by " Smṛiti rūpa paratra purvadr̥ṣṭavabhāsaḥ ". That is , super-imposition is the

20. Hemanta Kumar Ganguli : Radicalism in Advaita Vedānta (Indian Publicity Society , Calcutta 1988) pp 9-10.

21. The post-Samkarites use the term bhāvarūpa instead of anirvacanīya . But modern scholars in order to distinguish the advaita view from the Śūnyavādin like to emphasis on the term bhāvarūpa as something positive. But as a matter of fact in Advaita literature it cannot mean anything positive. In Advaita it cannot be said to be positive , nor negative, nor both but neither. In other words, it means the exact nature of illusion (adhyāsa) cannot be categorised and thus indescribable.

apparent presentation to consciousness by way of remembrance of something which is observed in some other thing at past . And in accordance with this, we find in common experience that the shell appears as silver and a single moon appears as two. True knowledge (pramā), according to the Advaitin, is that which is never sublated (avādhita). He holds that the unreal can never be knowable and the real can never be negated. He differs from those who maintain that the real alone is cognised and the unreal alone is rejected. The Advaitin would say that we cannot support the revelation of the non-existent, for it does not explain why an unreal object is grasped at all in illusion. Again, the silver-form cannot be internal or mental , for a vivid perceptual experience proves its externality. Nor can we regard the silver-form as existent or real, for the corrective cognition falsifies that possibility. We cannot say that the silver-form is both real and unreal, for that would be a contradiction. Therefore, the Advaitin contents that we must conclude that the silver is an anirvacanīya object which is not only distinct from the real as well as from the unreal but also from the real and unreal. So the silver-form belongs to a different category which is called mithyā .

According to Advaita Vedānta, the indeterminable is that which is negatable for all time, tri-temporal negation of past, present and future (traikālika-niṣedhasya). The contradicting judgment ' this is not a silver' reveals that the object appeared in illusion did not, does not and will not exist anywhere at any time. However, the Advaitin admits that the indeterminable is also of some sort of existence. The Advaitin maintains that there is no empirical knowledge without an object and this point draws the line of demarcation of Advaita

view from the Vijnānavādin who advocates that knowledge has no objective bias (viśayomuktatā). So the critics may put the question that if the indeterminable also is of some sort of existence, then how it will be negatable for all time ? Or the critics of Advaitin may argue that the correcting awareness definitely and unmistakably shows that the content of illusion is absolutely non-existent and therefore the acceptance of anirvācya object is not right. But in Advaitin's analysis of illusion the apparent silver is caught in themselves of an identity - an identity between the apparent silver and the real silver, and the identity of the apparent silver with an ' it '. On account of some defects , the 'shellness' of shell has been suppressed and the shell appears only as glittering ' it ' which in turn the seeming silver for finding an identity. Now the man who is under the illusion does not perceive the seeming silver as seeming silver. For seemingness itself can not figure in the content of illusion. A seeming silver is that which seems to be a silver but really not. So if the man perceives the silver as seeming silver, then no illusion occurs. But this does not mean that the real silver appears itself. Here appearance means appearance as real, but not appearance of the real and the man who is under an illusion experiences the ' seeming silver' as ' real silver '. Therefore in contradicting the ' shell-silver ' illusion the object of negation is obviously, the prātibhāsika silver as vyavahārika , i.e. the illusory silver in identity with the phenomenal silver becomes the object of negation. Unless we admit the phenomenal silver as an aspect or character of the relation between the negation and the negatum the apparent silver cannot be said to be rejected for all time. In illusory cognition the phenomenality was also cognised and the apparent object was taken as real ; in

corrective judgment it is understood as not the real. Therefore, the illusory content as such is not the object of negation. That is why, Madhusūdana interpretes the confusing statement of the Prakāśātman by saying that the ' prātibhāsika silver identified with ' it ' also identifies with the Vyavahārika silver in the sense that it appears as real silver.²²

In view of what has been said above, the Advaitin concludes that the negative judgment expresses the phenomenally non-existence of the seeming silver. The critic may at once point out that if it is so the question may arise : Why the prātibhāsika silver should not continue its appearance even after the correction ? In reply, the Advaitin would say that as the direct perceptual apprehension of the substratum of illusion (adhiṣṭhāna sakṣātkāra) cancels the avidyā which is the material cause of the anirvācya silver, it cannot shine in any form after correction. In super-imposition there are two parts - super-imposed object (adhyasta) and substratum of super-imposition (adhiṣṭhāna). When there is the direct apprehension of the locus i.e. shell, it is presumed that there is no more adhyāsa due to not having ignorance. Therefore, the objection that

22. Prakāśātman and other earlier Advaitins in general admit the phenomenal silver as the negatum of negation. But Madhusudana sarasvati argues that the acceptance of the phenomenal silver as the negatum would lead to mutual ' hetero-locativity ' (vaiyādhikarānya) of ' bhrama ' and ' vādha ' and to the negation of the unpredicated. He, therefore interpretes the words of Prakāśātman by saying that the silver as cognised in illusory cognition as identical with the phenomenal silver is the negatum :-

Na ca tatra laukika paramārtha-rajatam eva svarūpeṇa niṣedha-pratīyogī iti vācyaṃ, bhrama-bādhayoḥ vaiyādhika-rānyāpatteḥ,

the prātibhāsika silver should appear as anirvācya , cannot arise. Ānandabodha , the famous Advaita teacher who is earlier to Citsukha, is of the opinion that the right knowledge removes the veil of avidyā that covers the real nature of an object and then reveals it.

In Advaita literature the term avidyā (ignorance) has been metaphorically used to indicate the world-superimposition on Brahman as its ground. Here the effect is put for the cause. ~~The~~ Advaitins would agree to the point that ignorance is not the negation of knowledge but for them it is a kind of knowledge which cancelled latter on by the cognition of things as they are. By knowledge here the Advaitins do not mean intellectual knowledge but actual realization (aparoksānubhūti). For Advaita Vedānta , on account of ignorance (avidyā) there is the super-imposition of the Self on the non-self and its properties. Swami Vireswarananda aptly summarises the Advaitic position in the following words :

" This super-imposition (adhyāsa) due to ignorance is the presumption on which are based the distinctions among the means of knowledge , objects of knowledge and knowing persons, in our career of daily activity, and so are also based all scriptural texts whether they refer to rituals (karma) or knowledge (jñāna)."²³

aprasaktapratīṣedhāpattēśca Asya ācārya-vacasah pāramārthika-
laukika-rajata-tādātmyena pratītam prātibhāsikam eva rajatam
pratīyogi ityarthah."

- Advaita-siddhi vol. II, Tr. by Sri R.N. Ghosh (Samskrta Pustaka Bhandar, Calcutta , 1338, B.S.) p. 482.

Madhusudan also holds that even the phenomenal silver may be the negatum when the negation will be of anyonyābhāva type, but not atyantābhāva type and in this case the phenomenal silver is to be presented to the mind through recollection.

23. Brahma-Sūtras (English tr. and annotation, Swami Vireswarananda

The following table can show the different dominant views on ' Illusion ' generally discussed in Indian Philosophy at a glance.

Theorists	1 Mādhyamika Buddhism	2 Yogācāra Buddhism	3 Prābhākara Mimamsa	4 Nyāya-Vai- śeṣika	5 Viśiṣṭa- dvaita of Rāmā- nuja	6 Śāṅkarite Advaita Vedānta
Theories	Asatkhyā- tivāda	Ātmakhyā- tivāda	Akhyātivāda	Anyathākhy- ātivāda	Satkhyā- tivāda	Anirva- cāniya- khyāti- vāda
	[The con- tent of illusory cognition is non- existent (<u>asat</u>)]	[The con- tent of illusory cognition is the self]	[No illu- sory cog- nition in simple judgme- nts. -Non- discrimi- nation between perceived content and memory content in a unitary cognition makes a judgment erroneous]	[Illusory cognition consists of the object as something other than itself. It is due to misplaced and dis- placed facts.]	[The con- tent of illuso- ry cog- nition is real or "as is ". It lies in the failure to sat- isfy our practi- cal needs.]	[The con- tent of illu- sory cog- nition is false (<u>mith- yā</u>). Its Nature is in- deter- minab le]

III. Ajñāna as the material cause of illusion explained :

The Advaitin, therefore, admits the ignorance as the material cause of all illusionary cognitions. What is the psycho-physical process involved in such an illusory cognition ? If we consider a particular example of ' shell-silver ' it would be found that the defective organ, the eye has contact (sannikarṣa) with the presented thing (idaṁ). Then occurs the vṛtti which is the modification of antaḥkaraṇa as the form of ' idaṁ ' or ' this ' and ' brilliance ' . Next the consciousness delimited by the ' idaṁ ' (this) is reflected in the vṛtti ; and then the three grades of consciousness - first limited by ' this ', second, limited by vṛtti and third limited by mind-become one or non-different from one another . Now, the nescience in the ground of consciousness delimited by ' idaṁ ' by some defect and by the impression of past silver revived through the cognition of similarity is transformed into the ' apparant silver ' . At the sametime the nescience whose substratum is the consciousness delimited by the vṛtti becomes transformed into the vṛtti and takes the form of silver. These two transformations are revealed by the witness-consciousness and thus they are cognised. Thus the Prātibhāsika silver is the transformation of avidyā . The avidyā as the substratum of consciousness delimited by ' idaṁ ' projects the illusory silver with its potency called ' vikṣepa ' . Therefore, the illusory silver is not made of the stuff of ordinary silver, but of the stuff of avidyā . Avidyā as material cause exists in illusion. The author of Vivaraṇa assumes that ignorance is the material cause of the illusory content (arthādhyāsa) and illusion (Jñānādhyāsa).

But the critics may raise some objections against this view. It may be objected that whatever has a material cause, it must be real something. That which is not real cannot be an effect and cannot be said to arise from a material cause. The illusory silver being indeterminable cannot be real, therefore, it cannot be said to have a material cause.²⁴

The Advaitins point out that they differ from those according to whom the real must be an effect. The Advaitins hold that only which appears as real but not actually real is to be regarded as an effect. The illusory silver is not real, but appears as real, and therefore, it is taken to be an effect of something. It is an admitted fact that something can be called an effect, if it has a beginning (kāryyam prāgabhāvapratiyogī). The ' silver ' in illusion is not of a prior existence earlier than that of the state of illusion. If it had already been there, the knowledge about it would have been veridical , but not illusory. Therefore, we must maintain that the silver has a beginning and is thus an effect. And if it is an effect, it must come out from some material cause.

The critics of Advaitin may further point out that avidyā cannot be taken as the material cause of the illusory object since whatever we say as a material cause we have an experience that the particular effect is a transformation of that particular cause. The ring or the pot which is made of gold or clay comes to be known as something golden or earthen pot. But about the silver which the Advaitin claims, as the transformation of ajñāna, we have no such

24. For detailed analysis one may see Advaita theory of Illusion by Sukha Ranjan Saha (Progressive Publishers 1982) pp. 86-90.

experience. Therefore, ignorance should not be regarded as the material cause of the illusory silver.

In reply to the critics the Advaitin would urge that it is not true that the effect always comes to our experience as a transformation of its material cause. Even when the Sāṃkhya holds that the pot is a transformation of mūlāprakṛti, he also does not experience it in that mode. Nor the Naiyāyika who regards the pot as the inherent cause (samavāyī kāraṇa) of its colour, can say that he has an experience of the colour of a pot.²⁵ Hence though the illusory silver is not cognised as a transformation of ignorance, yet the ignorance can be taken as its material cause ; since both the illusory silver and the ignorance have the common nature of being revealed and they have some other similar properties and also they themselves cannot account for their manifestness.²⁶

There are differences among, the Advaitins themselves with regard to the function of ignorance (avidyā) as a material cause of super-imposition (adhyāsa).²⁷ But inspite of these, all of them

25. . . . Yad Yadupādanakam , tat tadanuviddhatayaiva Pratiyate itivyāptyasiddeḥ. Na hi ghaṭopādānakam rūpaṃ ghaṭa iti pratiyate; Prakṛtidvyaṅukādyanuviddhatayā pratiteḥ parairapyabhyupagamāt, kenacit-dharmena tadanuvedhastu prakṛte piṣṭaeva.

- Madhusudana Sarasvati - Advaitasiddhi with Laghucandrikā (Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1917) p. 546.

26. . . . Kathaṃcidanuvedhasya Jaḍatvādinātrāpi Sambhavāt .
- Ibid , p. 649

27. Prakaśātman, the author of Vivarāṇa is of opinion that the state of illusion (jñānādhyāsa) as well as the content of illusion (viṣayādhyāsa) are the products of ignorance in way of double transformation (avidyāvṛtti). He develops his argument in

are agreed to the point that the cognition of ' silver in shell ' is false (mithyā), though we have no experience of the form, " The illusion is false ". Śaṅkara deals with such a problem in his commentary on Brahma-sūtras. Śaṅkara mentions an analogy in this connection. " When rising from a dream a man feels that the objects and events like snake-bite, bathing in water etc. happened during the state of dream are false, he does not feel that his knowledge about them too is false."²⁸ In the like manner, according to the Advaitins, we shall have to admit that the illusion is false (mithyā), because it is sublated (vādhita) and if anything is sublated (vādhita) it is to be regarded as false (mithyā). However though the erroneous cognition in the form , " It is silver ", is possible with the assistance of self, antaḥkaraṇa and some defects, none of them can be accepted as the cause of illusion. They cannot be the cause of illusion, because the correcting cognition also needs

Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa (Madras, Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Lib., 1958, p. 89-90). But Nṛsimhāśarmā (in the Bhāvaprakāśikā , Ibid) shows that such a twofold transformation of ignorance in order to be the material cause of illusion is not relevant to Śaṅkara's view.

28. " Na hi svapnāt utthitaḥ svapnadr̥ṣṭam sarpadaṁsanodaka snānā-dikāryyaṁ mithyā iti manyamānaḥ tadavagatimapi mithyā iti manyate kaścit

- Brahma-Sūtra Śaṅkarabhāṣya , 2.1.14.

Also see, Visvarupananda : Vedānta Darśana (Bengali Tr.) vol.2, (Udbodhan karyalaya, Calcutta , 2nd ed., 1989) p. 93.

the help of self and antahkarana. Though defects have no part to play in respect of that cognition, the defects can not be regarded as false (mithyā). Therefore, the ajñāna which shares the same nature like mithyā with its effects is to be regarded as the material cause of the illusion. The ajñāna is mithyā because like the content silver it is removed or cancelled at the presence of the correcting cognition. Therefore, the Advaitins conclude that an anirvacaniya content like silver is a product of ajñāna .

It is said by the Advaitins that avidyā is directly experienced by us in such perceptions as " I do not know ", " I do not know what you say " or " I had been sleeping so long happily and did not know anything ". All such perceptions point to some quasi-positive ajñāna which is distinct from the negation of knowledge. If ajñāna is the negation of knowledge and by negation it means a general negation, then even where there is a pot on the table, we should perceive the negation of the pot on the table as the general negation in relation to other things. On the other hand ajñāna cannot be taken to mean the negation of some particular object. Particular negation appears as a substantive with the object of negation. It is a qualifying factor which specifies the nature of the negation. The notion of a general negation of knowledge is opposed to each and every knowledge. One may know many individual objects though he experiences the nescience like ' I do not know '. Hence ' I do not know ' is not equivalent to ' I know the absence of knowledge '. Moreover, the Advaitins claim that a negation cannot be perceived.²⁹

29. According to the Advaitins negation is not a separate entity, but is only a peculiar mode of expression of the positive and a negation cannot be perceived. But the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas recognize it to be objective and claim that negation is to be

So what we are aware of, when we are aware about our ignorance, is not a negation or absence of awareness.

IV. Māyā as the ground of cosmic illusion explained :

In our previous section we find that Śaṅkara and his followers admit the shell-silver as anirvācya and mithyā . They say that this adhyāsa takes place on account of an indefinite positive ajñāna. In Advaita metaphysics this ajñāna occupies a pivotal position, because without it, the Advaitins cannot establish the non-dual nature of Reality (Brahman) and determine the status of the multiplicity of the world. According to them the ajñāna which is also known as māyā projects the phenomenal world, including the finite being (Jīva) and God (Īśvara) . The individual selves owing to this māyā imagine themselves as different from Brahman and mistake Brahman as the world of plurality as we mistake a rope as a snake or a silver in a shell.

The terms ' māyā ' and ' avidyā ' are used in Advaita philosophy very often interchangeably . However there are two schools among later Advaitins regarding the question whether ' māyā ' and ' avidyā '

perceived. Though in the common sense view when there is no sense-object-contact there does not occur any perception. But the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas argue that sense object-contact is not of one sort only, it may differ as the objects of knowledge differ categorically. So in the case of the perception of an absence, the senses come into contact with absence which is related to its absence and the relation is objective. When we see the absence of a jar on the ground, the absence being the attributes of the ground, one may see the absence by his eyes which is related to the absence through the table. But the Prābhākaras maintain nothing but the bare locus of it. According to the Sāṅkhya philosophers, absence is a the then transformation of its so-called mere locus.

are identical or not, from the point of having two different aspects like concealment and the projection, but most of the Advaitins, even Śaṅkara used avidyā and māyā indiscriminately.³⁰ Vidyāraṇya in his work ' Vivaraṇa-prameya samgraha ' admits the non-difference of māyā and avidyā by quoting smṛti.³¹

Sadānanda quoted from Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad while describing ajñāna or māyā as " Sadasadbhyāṃ anirvacaniyāṃ trigunātmakāṃ jñāna-virodhī bhāvarūpam yat kiñcit iti."³² Śaṅkara in his wonderful work ' Vivekacūḍāmaṇi ' with his great literary taste presents it as follows :-

Sannyāpyasananāpyubhayātmika no , bhinnāpyabhinnāpyubhayātmikā no /
Sāṅgāpya naṅgahyubhayātmikā no, mahādbhutāhnirvacaniya rūpā //³³

From these two treatises it is clear that māyā or ajñāna cannot be categorised as either real or unreal. We cannot call it real, for it is destroyed by knowledge. Whatever is real, it can never be sublated. Similarly it cannot be unreal, for an unreal object say ,

30. Some Advaitins are of opinion that mūlaprakṛti is māyā and its effect of concealment (āvaraṇa) and projection (vikṣepa) are avidyā . It is also said by some that mūlaprakṛti is māyā which is made of pure sattva and avidyā is made of sattva, rajas and tamas . In some works of Advaita, māyā is said the power of concealment and avidyā is said the power of projection.

31. Taratyavidyam vitatām hr̥di yasminnivesite /
Yogi mayamneyāyā tasmai vidyātmane namah //
- Iti smṛtau māyāḥavidyayomurkhataḥ avaiikatvanirddaśāt . . .
- Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgrahaḥ (Kasi, Acyutagrantaṃmala , Samvat, 1896) p. 258.

32. Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda (Tr. Swami Nikhilananda, Mayavati, Advaita Ashram, 1978) p.21.

33. Trans. by Swami Vedāntananda , R.K. Mission Assram, Patna, 1984 p. 67.

' the son of a barren woman ' cannot be the cause of her pleasure and pain , māyā being the material cause of the world of multiplicity cannot thus be unreal (asat) . We cannot regard it as sadāsat ; for contrary qualities like being and non being cannot exist simultaneously in the same locus . Therefore it is indeterminate or anirvacanīya . Māyā is the composite of three gunas - sattva, rajas and tamas which are causes of pleasure, pain or indifference of phenomenal objects that are evolved from ajñāna.-

Rajastmaḥ sttvamiti prasiddhā gunāstudīyāḥ prathitaiḥ svakāryaiḥ.³⁴

Māyā is jñānavirodhī, for it is destroyed by the knowledge of Reality. The shell-silver illusion occurs when ajñāna residing in the locus of the shell covers its nature with its power of concealment. When knowledge of shell arises ajñāna is cancelled. Therefore, ajñāna or māyā has two properties of āvaraṇa or hiding the truth and vikṣepa or projection of the unreal . But we cannot call it as some of absence of apprehension but a positive aspect, that is, māyā is called as jñānavirodhī bhāvarūpaṁ .

In the philosophy of Śaṅkara this ' anirvācya jñānavirodhī bhāvarūpa māyā' is the logical pendent which brings forth the world of phenomena on the ground of Brahman without affecting and without undergoing any change of Brahman. In Advaita philosophy Caitanya which is all-pervasive is the sole reality. No phenomenal attributes or predications can be belonged to the Absolute Reality. From the empirical point of view we may say it as saccidānanda ; these are not its qualities, but it is existence as such , consciousness as such, bliss as such . Reality is Ātman . Reality is self-luminous

34. Vivekacūḍāmaniḥ , verse No. 110, (Ibid) p. 68.

(svaparakāśa). An objection may be raised that there is no self-luminosity in dreamless sleep, for after awaking from deep sleep one may say that he did not know anything regarding the sleeping state - because in that time there is no manifestation of the self. But the Advaitin denies it, for when a man is awakened from sleep he may say that he slept happily. Such feelings show that happiness which is directly felt at sleeping and expression of the same in awakened state is nothing but a remembrance of the past . The experience of happiness felt in the sleeping state cannot be said to be manifested in the continuous cosmic state of self-consciousness. This example also shows that the self was directly aware of ajñāna in swoon, (susupti), because when the swoon is over one says that he was slept so happily that he did not know anything. Therefore we must admit that self is self-luminous without which all time revelation of Brahman or Ātman cannot be accounted for. Self-revealing (Svaparakāśa) Brahman cannot depend upon any other object for its revelation ; on the contrary the so-called objects depend on Ātman for their revelation, since the existence of objects other than Brahman have only dependent existence.

Brahman is ' sat cit ānandasvarūpa '-these three are not the dharmas or attributes of Brahman, for It is absolutely nirguna . These so-called aspects are used in order to make Brahman somehow intelligible to the finite minds. The author of the Vedānta-paribhāṣā regards that these words are all super-imposed. In fact, these aspects are used to indicate that Brahman is not non-being, non-conscious and non-blissfull.

Nirguna Brahman is regarded as the highest Truth, the only Reality. Everything other than Brahman is not real, for they are not permanent. Śaṅkara asserts that it is impossible to explain

through logical categories the relation of Being and becoming or seeming, what is real can never have any relation with the unreal ' Na hi sadasatoḥ sambandhaḥ '.³⁵ The different explanations of creation are unsatisfactory and, therefore, they are rejected. The analogy of the relation between a tree to its branches or clay to the vessels is inapplicable to the relation between the Absolute and the finite, since all these analogies indicate a relation between the whole and the part, substance-attribute. Brahman, for Śaṅkara is devoid of parts and attributes. Any attempt to bring Brahman into connection with the world of seeming ends in failure. The becoming is not evolved or produced from the Absolute but only appears as so or seems to be so on account of māyā. Śaṅkara explains the world of multiplicity with the notion of māyā without infringing the nature of Brahman. The projection of the world and the appearance of the jīva are owing to māyā which is regarded as a śakti of Brahman, and it is not different from Brahman just like the burning power of fire is not different from fire itself.

V. Rāmānuja's sevenfold objections against the Advaita view of māyā examined.

Like other philosophers Śaṅkara's view-point is not left uncriticised by the later thinkers. Among the thinkers who are considered as opponents to Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja (1017 - 1137^{A.D.}) comes first. He has put forth some critical arguments in favour of not accepting māyā. A more vivid and distinct picture of the nature of māyā would be crystallised if we consider the major objections raised by Rāmānuja

35. Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad - 2.7 in Radhakrishnan's Indian Philosophy, vol. II (Op. Cit.) p.566.

against Śāṅkarite view of māyā and the possible counter arguments given by the later *advaitins*. Rāmānuja who flourished after Śāṅkara and lived a long life devoting to vedāntic culture, attempted to present a harmonious conglomeration of absolutism with personal theism. For Rāmānuja, unlike Śāṅkara, māyā is the real power of Brahman. Brahman according to Rāmānuja though devoid of homogenous and heterogenous differences, is not partless, Brahman has two aṅgas (parts) , one is cit (conscious) and the other is acit (non-conscious). Reality for him is not purely indeterminate, not pure identity or pure unity but unity amidst diversity, identity as qualified by difference. Thus it is quite natural for a philosopher who differs from Śāṅkara in the very conception of Reality, to attack the foundations of Śāṅkara's philosophy of the world, or māyāvāda from all possible standpoints. As a pūrvapakṣa (Thesis to be refuted) of Rāmānuja's philosophy, we come across his criticism of Śāṅkara's doctrine of māyā .

Rāmānuja in his well know ' Śrībhāṣya ' has raised ^{the} following seven principal objections against Śāṅkara's concept of māyā . Let us consider these one by one.

(1) The Āśrayānopapatti: Rāmānuja observes that it is impossible to determine a locus for māyā. The jīva cannot be the locus of ajñāna or māyā , because it itself is the product of māyā and the cause cannot depend on its effect. Neither can it be said to be in Brahman, for Brahman is jñāna-svarūpa . Jñāna and ajñāna being contradictory cannot have the same locus. ³⁶

36. Sā hi kimāśritya bhramam janayati. ? Iti vaktavyam . Na tāvajjī -
vamāśrotya ; avidyāparikalpitatvājjīvabhāvasya. Nāpi Brahmā-
śritya , tasya svayam prakāśajñānarūpatvenāvidya virodhitvāt.

(2) The Tirodhānanupapatti : Māyā , according to Śaṅkara, conceals the nature of Brahman which is self-luminous . Ajñāna is about the thing which is an object of knowledge. But Rāmānuja points out that Brahman cannot be admitted as the object of knowledge , therefore ajñāna cannot be about Brahman. If māyā is said to conceal the self-luminous Brahman, then concealment means either obstruction of the appearance of manifestation or destruction of the manifestation itself. As the manifestation of Brahman is natural and not adventitious, the concealment does not mean the former. If we admit the last one then it means that the self revealing nature of Brahman is destroyed by māyā and he ceases to be.³⁷

(3) The Svarūpānupapatti : Rāmānuja raises the objection that māyā has been said by the Advaitin as object-less (aviṣayaka) and owing to some defects impersonal self-luminous Consciousness becomes an infinite number of conscious subjects and apprehends an infinite number of objects . Now question comes : What is the real nature of the defect residing in consciousness ? We cannot call it real, for its reality is not admitted. Nor it is unreal too. For if it be unreal , it must be viewed as either the knower (draṣṭā) , or the known (drśya), or the knowledge (dr̥ṣṭi). These three is only conceivable in the world. The Advaitins cannot say it knowledge, because any distinction is altogether denied by them. It cannot be regarded as an object of knowledge existing within knowledge or

- Śrībhāṣyaṁ of Rāmānuja on Brahma-Sūtras . (Bengali Tr. Sri Yatindra Rāmānujacāryya , Sribalarām Dharmasopān, Khardaha, 24 Pargonas, 2nd ed. 1385 B.S.) p. 171.

37. Śrībhāṣyaṁ - 1.1.97 , (Ibid) p. 174.

consciousness, because then consciousness of consciousness is to be admitted. Hence the locus cannot be cognised at all. Further there will be regressus ad infinitum to regard it the knower, the known or the knowledge (conditioned by the knower and the known) as unreal. For to explain their unreality there must be assumed another defect which again will require a third defect and so on, Therefore, regressus ad infinitum occurs. In view of this, Brahman must be regarded as the defect in order to avoid this difficulty, and then, Rāmānuja points out, it is absolutely futile to posit any separate existence of any real imperfection in the form of avidyā . If this is accepted , the falsity of world appearance cannot be maintained .³⁸

(4) Anirvacanīyatvānupapatti : Rāmānuja criticises the anirvacanīya ajñāna , because every object should be determined accordingly by the dictates of our consciousness about them and such consciousness is in the form of either real or unreal. Now if it be claimed that by this consciousness of real or unreal an anirvacanīya object which is neither real nor unreal is testified, Rāmānuja argues, anything could be an object of any knowledge. Hence it is impossible to define ajñāna.³⁹

(5) The Pramānānupapatti : Rāmānuja charges that the inference advanced by the Advaitins in support of ' bhāva rūpa ajñāna ', is fallacious on account of the contradictory middle (viruddha - hetu) and inconclusive (anaikāntika). It is viruddha in this

38. Ibid - 1.1.98 , pp. 175-176.

39. Ibid - p. 176.

sense that the probans in the inference of the Advaitins proves something which is not intended by the Advaitins. The Advaitins put forward the inference that 'right knowledge (pramā) is preceded by something else (vastavantorapūrvakam) which is removed by it, for it (pramā) manifests a thing which was not manifested before. A pot in the state previous to its perception was unmanifested, that is, was covered by something (ajñāna) which is removed by knowledge when it manifests the pot; just as the first rays of a lighted lamp remove darkness in a room and manifest things which were covered by darkness. Thus the existence of ajñāna as something positive is proved.⁴⁰ Rāmānuja points out that the hetu (aparakāśitārthaparakāśakatva) of this inference will establish a second ajñāna which is not admitted by the Advaitins. Because the inference has for its object 'bhāvarūpa ajñāna' which should be admitted to the previously veiled by another ajñāna , and the proper knowledge (pramā) removes this second ajñāna . Therefore, the proposed hetu which establishes another ajñāna which is not intended by the Advaitins, is viruddha.

Moreover, the hetu is anaikānta or inconclusive, because it exists in both the sapakṣa as well as in the vipakṣa . The hetu certainly exists in the sapakṣa , but it equally exists in the jñānābhāva ajñāna , which according to the Advaitins is vipakṣa and therefore the probans becomes anaikāntika .

40. Pramāṇajñānam svaprāgabhāva-vyatirikta-svaviṣayāvaraṇa-svanivarttya-svadeśagata - vastvantarapūrvakam , aprakāśitārthaparakāśakatvāt , andhakāre prathamotpannaprdīpaprabhavaditi.
- Ibid , 1.1.100 , p. 182.

Rāmānuja points out that the example (light of a lamp removes darkness and manifests things which were covered by darkness) given by the Advaitins is also fault. For the light of a lamp never manifests an object but it is a knowledge by which the un-manifested object is manifested. The object remains unknown to a blind man, even the existence of a lamp. It is knowledge only that manifests thing, so the hetu does not exist in the example.

The existence of ajñāna as a bhāvarūpa object cannot be proved by perception like ' I am ignorant ' I do not know myself ' etc. It is said by the Advaitins that in such experience ajñāna which is not jñānabhāva is proved, because jñānābhāva and jñāna (pratiyoḡī or counter entity to ajñāna) being contradictory cannot have the same locus. But Rāmānuja argues that this difficulty cannot be overcome even if ajñāna is taken to mean bhāvarūpa . If it is said by Śaṅkara that bhāvarūpa ajñāna is opposed to pure knowledge (viśuddasvarūpa) of the real nature of the self and not to any kind of knowledge, and is cancelled by the pure knowledge, Rāmānuja urges that then ajñāna as jñānabhāva is opposed to pure knowledge of the real nature of self and not to each and every kind of knowledge of it. Again , the bhāvarūpa ajñāna, being non-identical with jñāna is dependent on the knowledge of its pratiyoḡī as the jñānābhāva ajñāna is . Thus arises also the ' Bhāvarūpatvānupapatti of avidyā '.⁴¹

(6) The Nivarttakānupapatti : It is said by Śaṅkara that the cessation of avidyā takes place when the knowledge of unqualified Brahman arises. But Rāmānuja objects to this suggestion, because

41. Ibid - pp. 177-178.

according to him it contradicts ~~some~~ Upaniṣadic texts where it is clearly pointed out that the qualified God who is free from any taint of blemish. The Upaniṣadic dictum ' tat tvam asi ' (that thou art) according to Rāmānuja distinctly points out the non-identity of forms between these two, because it is meaningless to assert any identity between exactly identical terms. Identity can be asserted between two forms of the same substance.⁴² Hence, the knowledge of the identity between Brahman and jīva is absurd.

(7) The Nivṛtṭyānupapatti : The last objection advanced by Rāmānuja is that if the means for the removal of avidyā is not established, there can be no cessation of it.⁴³

It is interesting to note that how the followers of Śāṅkara left no stone unturned to meet these objections from the Śāṅkarite standpoint.

(1) The Advaitins hold that the jīva can be regarded as the locus of avidyā . In the view of Acharya Maṇḍana jīva is the locus of avidyā and Brahman is the object of it. Vācaspati Miśra in the Bhāmati , a commentary on Śāṅkara-bhāṣya , admits the jīva as the locus of avidyā .⁴⁴ The objection that the jīva being posterior to avidyā cannot be the substratum of it, - does not arise at all. The Advaitins give the analogy of the tree and the seed

42. Ibid - p. 226.

43. Ibid - p. 253.

44. Tasmājjivādhikaraṇāpi avidyā nimittayā viṣayatayā vesvaramāśrayata itīśvarāśrayetucyate, Na tu ādhāratayā vidyāsvabhāve brahmāni tadnupapatteḥ - Bhāmati on Śāṅkara-bhāṣya , Beng. ed. and Tr. Sri Mohan Bhattacharya (Kuran Bhattacharya , Manomohan Park, Calcutta-8, 1973)

in order to explain the interdependent aspect of the beginning-
less-ness of ajñāna and the jīva . Petitio Principi may be con-
ceived to exist between the tree in series and the seed in series,
because the former is the cause of the later and vice versa . And
both are beginningless. Thus there is no logical see-saw . Simi-
larly, both māyā and jīvahood rest in the same portion of Caitanya
and are determinant of the other. It may be noted that this analogy
should not be stretched too far . The analogy does not mean that
jīvahood and avidyā should be conceived as series.⁴⁵

(2) When it is said that māyā conceals the real nature of
Brahman, this does not mean that Brahma-prakāśa is ceased. Rāmānuja
fails to understand the actual intention of Śaṅkara. Just as a
patch of cloud conceals the sun by preventing a person from percei-
ving the sun, similarly, māyā conceals Brahman from the individual
who is under ignorance. So in admitting the māyā as a power of
concealment the self-luminosity of Brahman is not destroyed at all.

(3) There is no regressus ad-infinitum in maintaining ajñāna
residing in consciousness. The Advaitin admit that ajñāna is begin-
ningless and established itself. It is an object (dr̥ṣṭā) to the
Sākṣī .

(4) The Advaitin retorts that there is every justification
for admitting ajñāna as an anirvācya object. In order to justify
the prior perception and the subsequent cancellation of the ' shell-
silver ' evidence, we must admit it as anirvācya , which is neither

45. Amalānanda : Vedānta-Kalpataru (Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press,
1948) p. 420.

real nor unreal. In the Advaitāmoda it is noted that as the light and darkness being contradictory to each other, the darkness is not an object of light, but it is established by light ; so ajñāna is not an object of cognition either of the real or of the unreal, but is established as indefinite by the cognitions of the real and the unreal .⁴⁶

(5) Rāmānuja is wrong in taking the subject of the Advaitin's inference viz ' right knowledge ' to mean any and every right knowledge ; but it was not the intention of the Advaitins. By ' right knowledge ' they mean immediate right knowledge and not inference and other mediate varieties. Further, the inference advanced by the Advaitins does not prove the existence of ajñāna , but only establishes bhāvarūpatva of it. The existence of ajñāna is directly intuited by the eternal sākṣīcaitanya . Therefore, there cannot be any other ajñāna about ajñāna.

It has been argued by Rāmānuja that the example used by the Advaitins is faulty. In reply to this objection it may be said that the manifesting power of light cannot be totally denied. The light is called the revealer in the sense that it removes darkness which obstructs the manifestation of an object. But the sense-organs do not destroy any such obstacle of manifestation ; they only effect a relation or connection between the mind and the thing.

Rāmānuja points out that the perception like ' I am ignorant ' does not prove the existence of any bhāvarūpa ajñāna but merely indicates absence of knowledge. But according to the Advaitins,

46. Vasudeva Śāstri : Advaitamoda (Op. Cit.) p. 139.

ajñāna is bhāvarūpa because it can remain side by side with jñāna simultaneously, which the absence of knowledge being contradictory of knowledge cannot do. Moreover, it has already been noted earlier that ajñāna cannot be regarded as absence of knowledge.

(6) It is a fact that in Śruti, passages referring both to Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman are found. Śaṅkara says that knowledge of Nirguna Brahman arises as soon as there is cessation of avidyā or ajñāna and it leads to emancipation. But Rāmānuja, on the other hand, emphasises on bhakti and holds that uninterrupted meditation on Saguna Brahman brings salvation to a jīva. But Śaṅkara's interpretation seems to be a more plausible than Rāmānuja. Śaṅkara admits the importance of Saguna Brahman. Meditation and worship is necessary for mental purification. The knowledge of Saguna Brahman leads to the knowledge of Nirguna Brahman. As Swami Vivekananda thinks that the personal God is necessary for the spiritual aspirant only, the worship of personal God is but a support during the individual's spiritual childhood. Bhakti and karma purify the mind and thus they are the remote causes of emancipation.

Rāmānuja criticises that the upaniṣadic dictum " that thou art " does not point out the complete identity between Supreme Self and individual self. In his opinion it is unthinkable that man who is finite can be identical with God in every respect. But in the Advaitic thought the word ' thou ' is to be understood to imply pure Consciousness underlying man and ' That ' to imply also pure Consciousness which is the essence of God. There exists absolute identity between these two .

(7) The Advaitins point out that in Śruti and Smṛti it is clearly indicated that bondage is due to māyā and jñāna destroys karma , " Kṣīyante cāśya karmāṇi tasmin dr̥ṣṭe parāvare " (Mund. Upanisad 2.ii.9). In the Gītā it is said " jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi bhasmasāt kurute tathā " (iv. 3) . True vision of the self removes for ever the avidyā which is the cause of bondage.

In view of the above, it is clear that the world is not condemned to be absolutely unreal by Śaṅkara. In different occasions, Śaṅkara uses different metaphors in order to stress on the ultimate unreality of the jagat (world) . But metaphors are not to be taken beyond the sense of breaking point. But the appearance of the multiplicity of the world can not be ignored. So long as we are here in the world, we cannot say it as unreal. In other words the functional reality of the multiplicity of the world cannot be denied. As the later Advaitins developed a vast Vedānta literature in order to defend the Śaṅkarite Advaita, it would not be out of consideration to say that many critics have failed to grasp the real significance of māyā or avidyā and as a result of this they have charged Śaṅkara with explaining the world away. In reply to this one may share the view of . C. D. Sharma. Sharma very aptly remarks : " But this charge (of explaining the world away) is based on a shifting of the standpoints. Śaṅkara has granted some degree of reality even to dreams, illusions and errors. How can he, then take away the reality of this world ? The words, ' real ' and ' unreal ' are taken by Śaṅkara in their absolute sense. Real means real for all time and Brahman alone can be real in this sense. Similarly, unreal means absolutely unreal like the hare's horn, which this phenomenal world is not. Hence this world

is neither real nor unreal. This shows its self-contradictory and therefore incomprehensible nature. It is relative phenomenal finite. But it is not illusory. It is true for all practical purposes. What does it matter to us, worldly people if it is not absolutely true in the philosophical sense ? When the reality which is denied to this world means ' non-eternality '. Who can stand up and say that the world is not ' unreal ' if ' unreal ' means non-eternal ? Again, the world will be sublated only when knowledge dawns and not before. This should make us humbly strive after true knowledge rather than engage ourselves in futile quarrels . Śaṅkara's intention is perfectly clear - none can condemn this world as unreal , he who does it , is not qualified to do so and he who is qualified to do so will not do so, for he would have risen above language and finite thought ."⁴⁷

VI. The status of Jīva (individualised soul) and Jagat (the universe) in the Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta considered : (a) Avacchedavāda and Vivartavāda explained :

From the fore-going sections, it appears that the prime concern of the Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta is to establish Brahman as the sole Reality. A question may arise here : what is the status of jīva and the world in Advaita philosophy ? How has the concept of māyā been applied to sort out this problem ?

In response of such queries it is to be noted that full and complete demonstration is not found in Śaṅkara's writings in a connected way. In later times this concept has been developed by his followers right up to the sixteenth century. They analysed

47. A critical Survey of Indian Philosophy ,(Delhi , Motilal Banarsidass, 1978) p. 279.

and systematized it through their controversies with their rival schools with the addition of some new implications. And in doing this, they sometimes differ among themselves on many points.

In Śaṅkara's philosophy the jīva which passes through the diverse experiences of worldly life is merely the appearances of the Pure Consciousness. It attains jīva-bhāva owing to māyā . Even Īśvara is the production of māyā . The later Advaitins have drawn the distinction between māyā and avidyā to explain the phenomenal Īśvara and the phenomenal jīva . They hold that when Pure Cit is reflected in māyā , Īśvara is produced and when it is reflected in avidyā , jīva is produced. According to them, māyā is that aspect of ajñāna by which only the best attributes are projected whereas the function of the avidyā is to project the impure qualities. In its function of avidyā , āvaraṇa or the veiling characteristics are prominent and in the functions of māyā the projecting (vikṣepa) type become prominent.

In Bādrāyaṇa's ' Brahma-Sūtras ' thus the relation of Brahman and Jīva has been explained in two ways.⁴⁸ Basing on this twofold conception regarding the relation of Brahman and Jīva , the Śaṅkarite Advaitins developed two fullfledged theories . The first theory in this respect is usually known as ' Avacchedavāda ' while the second is called ' Vivartavāda ' . The theorists who hold ' avacchedavāda ' very often give the analogy of ākāśa (space) with the ' ghaṭākāśa ' (space limited by a jar) . According to them, ākāśa when limited by ghaṭaḥ (a jar), it as a matter of fact, does not suffer any

48. "Amso nānāvya-padeśāt , anyathācāpi dāśkitabāditvamadhīyata eke."-
Brahma-Sūtras - 2.3.43.

modification. The ākāśa limited by the ghaṭaḥ is conceived as something separate from the original ākāśa so long as the said ghaṭaḥ remains . When the ghaṭaḥ is destroyed , the ākāśa remains there as one cosmic ākāśa . Similarly the Pure Cit seems to be limited by mind-body complex but in fact remains unaffected by this apparent limitation. When the Absolute is conceived on the so-called conditions of mind-body limitations, Its real nature is hidden and It suffers a limitation and attains jīvabhāva (individual beinghood).

The theorists of vivarta or pratibimba (reflection) , also gives several analogies in order to explain their position. One of the common examples, they usually cite, is the cognition of the sun in different sheets of water. For them, our inner organ (Antaḥkaraṇa) is the condition (Upādhi) in which the Absolute is reflected. That is why the reflections of the Absolute in different inner organs are different and we have different individual beings (Jīva) , just like the reflections of the sun in different sheets of water are different. " Therefore just as the trembling of a particular reflection of the sun does not cause the other reflections to tremble so also the experiencing of happiness and misery by a particular Jīva or individualized soul is not shared by other souls. Hence there can be no confusion of the results of action ." ⁴⁹

(One may also see Swami Vireswarananda's Tr. of Brahma-Sūtras, Mayavati , Advaita Ashram, 1982 , p. 238 and p. 242).

Again, the main tenet of vivartavāda may be traced to Bādrāyana when he says ' Ābhāsa eva ca ' - Brahma-sūtras - 2.3.50.

49. Ibid, p. 243.

However, it is to be noted in this connection that among the Pratibimbavādins, Sarvajñātmā Muni thinks that when Cit is reflected in ignorance (ajñāna), we have Īśvara; and when Cit is reflected in inner organs (Antaḥkaraṇas), which are products of ignorance (ajñāna), the individualized souls (Jīvāḥ) appear.

Those who support the relation as being of the pratibimba type regard that Śaṅkara himself suggests it. The author of Ratnaprabhā argues that the word ' eva ' in the sūtra ' Ābhāsa-eva ' clearly points out that the intention of Sūtrakāra is to support this theory of reflection. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan " Śaṅkara supports this view on account of its suggestive value, seeing that it brings out that the original reality remains untarnished by the impurities of the reflection."⁵⁰ The jīva is the reflection of the One Reality in avidyā and is not real. On the abolition of avidyā, the reflection ceases to exist and the Pure Cit only remains. There are some objections against this theory. For example we may cite the followings :

- (1) Only those substances which have a colour and form can be reflected.
- (2) If the individual is a reflection, then that which is reflected must be outside the reflector, and the Reality must exist beyond the cosmos or the sum-total of created objects. Therefore, the reflection being wholly different from the reflector, there will be no identity between these two, i.e. the Jīva and Brahman and this is also opposed to the immense view of the Brahman.

50. Indian Philosophy, Vol. II (Delhi, Oxford University Press 1989) p. 607.

Against these objections the Advaitins would reply that in their philosophy 'Cit' is not a substance since it is described as devoid of all qualities and a substance cannot be admitted as such. However, both the Bhāttas and the Advaitins accept sound which emanates from the throat as a substance. Phonetic sound which comes from the throat and the palate reflects in an obstructing medium through wave like motion and is known as the echo. It is nothing but the original sound superimposed on the reflecting medium, though appears to be distinct from the original. Therefore, the objection that a colourless substance cannot be reflected at all is not based on fact. That a thing devoid of form cannot cast any reflection is also untenable.

The author of Vivarāṇa tries to find a way out of this difficulty in his theory of bimbapratibimbābheda-vāda (non-difference of the original and the reflection). He suggests that as the rays proceeding from the eyes being obstructed by a mirror turn back to the original face and make it perceptible, so is the case here that the reflection is the original itself. Moreover, when the actual ākāśa is reflected in water, the original exists in the water along with the reflected ākāśa. Ākāśa is ubiquitous (bibhu), therefore, it cannot be said to non-exist anywhere. Vivarāṇa thinks that the reflection is real but according to Suresvara, one of the supporters of ābhāsa theory holds that reflection is unreal. He says that Brahman owing to māyā appears to be the jīva-bhāva and attains in bondage for getting its real nature, like that of a prince who was being brought up among the cowboys from early childhood forgot that he was a prince and behaved like the cowboys. When he realises his real status, he restores to his natural position. Suresvara

points out that Śaṅkara himself supported this theory when he said "Brahmaiva svāvidyayā saṁsarati svavidyayā mucyate."⁵¹

Against the theory of limitation it is argued by the other school that when a jīva goes to the other world on account of its potency of merit and demerit, the intelligence limited by it on the earth is not transferred there. The intelligence being different the jīva would enjoy fruits of action (Karma) not done by it and also would not ripe the result of the actions performed by him. This will lead to unsatisfactory moral effect such as kṛtanāśa (destruction of the rewards of our karma) and akṛtabhyāgama (fruits of actions not performed by the agent) . Again, Brahman which is infinite and unlimited cannot be limited by anything.

Because of the above difficulties in both the theories a group of post Śaṅkara Advaitins regards that both Īśvara and the soul are appearances (ābhāsa) of the Brahman on account of māyā which is inexplicable principle. This principle of inexplicability is beyond any explanation. Sureśvara asserts that this very inexplicability is the character of māyā or avidyā - " The unique distinguishing definition of avidyā is that it is unable to bear the impact of reason ."⁵²

51. Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad , (Anandasram Sanskrit Series, Bombay, pp. 280-81) see also The Doctrine of Māyā , (Op. Cit.) p. 122

52. avidyāyā avidyātva idameva tu lakṣaṇam /
mānāghātāsahiṣṇutvam asādhāraṇamiṣyate //
- Bṛhadāraṇyaka-bhāṣya vārtika 1/181
(Anandasram Sanskrit Series, Bombay)

(b) The world is the projection of māyā :

Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda considered :

In Advaita philosophy the world too is the projection of māyā, it is an appearance like ' shell-silver '. As the ' shell-silver ' is realised as false with the knowledge of the shell, so the world will be realised as such with the revelation of Brahman . Śāṅkara in his commentary on Gauḍapāda's Māṇḍukyakārikā states it as follows - " Jāgradr̥ṣyānām bhāvānām vaitathyaṁ iti pratijñā ,

Dr̥ṣyatvāditi hetuḥ , svapnadr̥ṣyabhāvaditi dr̥ṣṭāntaḥ /"⁵³

whatever is knowable is unreal. The Brahman being Pure Consciousness is not an object of consciousness and being Self-luminous It is not manifested by consciousness. But the objects in waking state are knowable in dream. Therefore, the objects in waking state are unreal as the dream objects are.

A group of Advaitins does not agree even to give the world such a status of illusion which has some sort of indefinable existence. Prakāśānanda , the author of ' Vedānta siddhānta-muktāvali ' declares that the world is a total fiction just like a rabbit-horn. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī also holds the similar view and considers Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi as the highest and purest doctrine of the Advaita philosophy. According to the dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda, illusory perception of each individual occurs for him subjectively and it has no corresponding objective phenomena which exist behind it ; the phenomena have no objective basis, but are only subjectively imagined. This theory,

53. Śāṅkarabhāṣya on Māṇḍukya-Kārikā , (Op. Cit.) 2.4., p.77

therefore claims that the subjective perceptions creates the objects and there is no objective phenomena apart from subjective perceptions. Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādī regards that the world, being, absolutely non-existent, is not even a false appearance of anything else; the Brahman is without any appearance other than itself. According to the vivartavādī the world is not the pariṇāma of māyā , but the vivarta of Brahman. The world, for them is granted a status higher than an object of illusion in a recognised hierarchy of existence. They also recognised some sort of objective status external to the empirical knowledge of an object of ordinary illusion like the ' rope-snake ' or ' shell-silver '. But the dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādī unequivocally declares everything but the Brahman, as pure nothing.

In this connection, the name of Maṇḍaṇa Mīśra, a post Śaṅkara Advaitin who propounded the theory of dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi may be referred. It is said that Maṇḍaṇa in his early life was Mimāṃsaka but came under the spell of Śaṅkara being defeated by him, after then he modified and changed his views. In the initial statutory verse of ' Brahmasīddhi ' , while he explains the word ' akṣara ' , he unreservedly exposes the cause of śabdādvaita which has been propounded by the well-known scholar Bhartr̥hari ,. In his ' Vākyapadīya ' Bhartr̥hari elaborately explains that the world is a system of linguistic meaning-fictions imposed on the One Reality, the universal Logos-Consciousness .⁵⁴ It is called as ' akṣara ' . Maṇḍaṇa following this view remarks that every day many objects used in our pattern

54. anādinidhanam brahma śabdatatvam yadaḥkṣaram /
 vivartateḥarthabhāvena prakriyā jagato yataḥ //
 - Vākyapadīya - Kārikā - 1 (with Bengali tr. W.B. State Book Board , Calcutta , 1985) p.1

of behaviour such as positive and negative injunctions, the sentential meaning, the fire brand circle, the rabbit horn and so on. Such objects have no other character other than linguistic fictitiousness. With the strength of these analogies Maṇḍana regards that the worldly objects should also be taken as linguistic fictions. But in evaluating the status of māyā he holds that māyā or avidyā is absolutely indescribable (Anirvacanīya) as it is neither real nor absolutely unreal (atyāntasat) like sky-lotus. If it were unreal, it can serve no practical purpose, but in fact it does so. Māyā is called mithyābhāsa or false appearance.⁵⁵ Maṇḍana accepts two kinds of avidyā - non-apprehension (agrahana) and mis-apprehension (anyathāgrahaṇa). These two are known as the power of concealment and that of projection. According to Maṇḍana, jīva is the locus of avidyā. Pure Consciousness cannot be the locus of avidyā. Each individual is responsible for his jīvabhāva on account of avidyā. Now a question may arise: how avidyā resides in the jīva? Because the jīva himself is the product of avidyā. Maṇḍana replies that both the jīva and avidyā are beginningless and both go on determining each other in a vicious circle like the seed and plant.⁵⁶

55. Nāvidyā brahmaṇḥ svabhāvaḥ nārthāntaram , nātyantamasatī , nāpi sati ; ebamebeyamavidyā māyā mithyāvabhāsa ityuchate . . . tasmādanirvacanīyā |

- Brahmasiddhi (Ed. by Mm. Prof. S. Kuppaswami Shastri, Madras , 1937) p. 9

56. Anāditvādubhayorvidyā jīvayorvījāmkurasantānayorivanetaretarāśrayatva- prakāṣṭimāhatīti .

- Ibid . p. 10 .

Madhusūdana in his Advaitaratnaraksana vehemently denies any pragmatic reality of the world and suggests that pragmatic reality is nothing but fictionality. In support of the fictitious character of the world he refers to a half verse of Gauḍapāda and Śāṅkara's interpretation—there on as evidence. - " Prapañcho yadi vidyeta nivarteta na samsayah " ⁵⁷ The difference between the phenomena and the illusory is that the former is negated by such a knowledge which negates all distinction , while the later is cancelled by some knowledge which is not such . In dreaming state somebody may experience a lucid dream such as a snake bites him, and may further dream that the snake was a dreaming object. Then when he wakes up he realises that all these are mere dream. Madhusūdana considers that a dream affirmation and a dream negation belongs to the same level of existence, negation of negation does not indicate the affirmation. As the inclusive dream longer than the included dream ^{it} cannot confer a higher grade of existence and reality, ^{and} so the pragmatic world does not claim a higher grade of reality.

The Ajāta vāda is illustrated by Gauḍapāda in his kārikā in the following way :

" There is neither dissolution, nor creation ; neither any bonded self, nor any practising saint, neither a person striving for salvation, nor an emancipated self - this is the essence of truth." ⁵⁸ Śāṅkara in his commentary of this kārikā explains it as

57. Śāṅkarabhāṣya on Māṇḍukya-kārikā , 1/17 (Op. Cit.) p. 53

58. Na nirodho na cotpattir na baddho na ca sādhaḥ /
Na mumukṣur na vai mukta ityeṣā parmārthatā //2.61.32
- Ibid. p. 103

" creation and dissolution can be spoken of only about something which exists . But the many do not exist at all, so the question of its creation does not arise . A rabbit horn is neither created nor destroyed." He proceeds " a rope-serpent is neither created nor dissolved ; just as the rope-serpent the world is only a mental construction."⁵⁹ Most probably this explanation of Samkara directly inspires the theory of 'dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi ' which straightly shows the fictitious nature of the phenomenal existence.

The dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādi asserts that in vivartavāda there is some experience at least of something other than Brahman, however false it be, but the Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādins do not ready to give such a status to the world.

The extreme subjectivist, Prakāśānanda (sixteenth century philosopher) asserts a total non-existence and pure fictitiousness of the world. Perhaps he is inspired by Śāṅkara's description " Jagat tucchametad samastam tadanyat " - (Daśaśloki verse No. 9)⁶⁰ He brings charges against the theory of vivarta that it cannot escape from dualism. Pure non-dual Brahman can have no false appearance, for then its purity could not have stood unaffected . Avidyā or māyā is nothing but pure fictions and absolutely non-existent.⁶¹ The objects come into existence when it is perceived.

59. Ibid.

60. Daśaśloki verse No. 9 ; See: Radicalism in Advaita Vedānta , Hemanta Kumar Ganguli (Indian Publicity Society, Calcutta, 1988) p. 93.

61. . . . tathā ca ātmano daitadr̥ṣṭiḥ kadacidapi Nastyeva (p.275)
 . . . tadatiriktasya kathañcidapi sattve advaitavyāghātaprasa-
 ṅgāt / tasmāt jagatastucchatvam śrūtyanumatameva
 - Vedānta-Siddhānta-Muktavali (Ibid) pp. 273-75. Also in
Radicalism in Advaita Vedānta (Op. Cit.) p. 142.

Cognition of objects results only when the willing power of māyā screens the Brahman and projects it out of the will by the projecting power and the objects last as long as the cognition lasts. Negation (Vādha) is not the ceassation of avidyā and the world, but it means the realisation of absolute negation of the world through a correct understanding of the scriptural texts such as " Thou art that " or " I am Brahman."

Prakāśānanda proceeds through a critical review of vivartavāda and arrives at the most cordinal point that they deny the assumption that the Brahman assumes a false appearance and by this they are maintaining the purest principle of Advaita and it^{is} the only possible consistent conclusion emerged from the Oneness of Reality.

But a close examination of Śaṅkara's writings shows that Śaṅkara never maintained such a solipsistic view. In his commentary under the ' Brahma-Sūtras ' Śaṅkara severely criticises the viññānavādins view that there is no external object but the knowledge itself. Again in the commentary on ' Brahma-Sūtras ' (verse 2.2.31) he dismisses the Śūnyavāda of Nāgārjuna by saying that a philosophical doctrine which depicts the empirical world as a transitory show of non-substantial appearance (Śūnya) is not even worthy of criticism.⁶² The cosmos according to Śaṅkara is the realm of cause

62. It may be noted that perhaps, depending on the popular usage of the term ' Śūnya ' which means absolute unreality, void or zero, Śaṅkara criticises the view of Mādhyamika. But the Mādhyamika kārīkā and other texts composed by Nāgārjuna shows that he negates the reality of the empirical world as a stupendous zero. According to him the phenomenal existences, are ' Śūnya ' in the sense that they are mutually dependent and relative and having no self-essence of their own (niḥsvabhāva).

and effect (Kārya-Kāraṇa-Prapañca), though it is rooted in the Brahman. Among the four levels of Being - tuccha or Alīka , prātibhāsika , vyavahārika and pāramārthika , the highest or the fourth is presupposed by the third. This presupposition is based upon the epistemological principle that every falsity presupposes truth. The illusory appearance of snake as a being is false, but this appearance is due to the fact that has the borrowed being of the rope. The world of names and forms though are self-contradictory and false appears as being, for the Being gleams through the world. Without being shining or gleaming through the form there cannot be any perception but only imagination like the rabbit-horn. Therefore, the Brahman is the root of world appearance.

(c) The Three-tier hierarchy of existence considered :

Śaṅkara admits a three-tier-hierarchy of existence . These three modes of existence are - the absolute and fundamental one which is credited to the Brahman alone, the second is pragmatic or phenomenal world and the third one is illusory, these three grades of existences are true at the same time in their own sphere without contradicting the other ; but except the absolute or Pāramārthika Sattā which is the only real, each of these modes of existence , the conceptual notion of the later one, is sublated when the true knowledge of the earlier one arises. The world, according to Śaṅkara, is not a fiction. Non-existence of the external world, Śaṅkara says, is a prima facie impossible. The apprehension of the external world in every act of perception cannot be denied. While explaining the Sūtra " Vaidharmyācca na svapnādivat ' he endorses the view that the mundane level of reality cannot be linked to a

dream.⁶³ Here he is in the same platform with the realists and the pragmatists in admitting the existence of an external world, outside and independent of the subject mind and judges the validity of knowledge by practical results. The world then according to Śaṅkara " is pervaded by Truth, and it has Truth as its substratum ; as such every experience has an element of truth in it and is valid in its own sphere. We have the right to transcend particular experiences on a different plane in the light of higher and more general experience, but not to reject a valid experience in its own sphere."⁶⁴

It is also interesting to note in this connection that the admission of two grades of reality has been shown in the Upaniṣads where it is said : " Now the designation for him is the truth of truth. Verily, the vital breath is truth and He is the truth of that."⁶⁵ The unreality of the world is revealed only from the transcendental level, as the dream world is false only when we justify it with our awaking state. The world is real within its frame-work . Śaṅkara's Philosophy never gives a suicidal advice by giving up the life, our values . Our morality, our aspiration

63. Brahma-Sūtras 2.2.29(Op. Cit.) p. 197

64. Swami Mukhyananda : Acharya Śaṅkara, an interpretation (Sri A. Ramkrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady, Ernakulam, 1987) p. 122.

65. . . . atha nāma-dheyam satyasya stayaṁ iti. Prāṇā vai satyaṁ, tesāṁ eṣa satyam -
 - Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad - verse 2.3.6. in ^{The} Principal Upaniṣads
 (Op. Cit.) p. 194.

and achievements - all have relative or phenomenal reality. This worldly reality is nothing but the phenomenal one. " Just as the physicist's view of matter and the nature of the physical universe gives, without affecting the ordinary life, a new-dimension to our understanding of the physical universe, by knowing the Highest Truth we understand the real nature of the entire phenomenal universe and of ourselves ." ⁶⁶

Moreover, Śaṅkara uses linguistic analysis in order to put-forward his own view as well as to refute others. He is actually emphatic in respect of the empirical Pramāṇas like Pratyakṣa , Anumāna etc. All are valid in its own aspect. Perception has its supreme validity in knowledge through its senses. All cognitive acts, the means of right knowledge and the scriptural texts have a relative value, for they are capable of producing empirical knowledge. Other than this, the conceptual designations etc. are the means through which one can achieve the Ultimate goal.

Śaṅkara says that the world is a super-imposition on Brahman as the snake is on the rope . But the illusory snake does not spring out of nothing. Appearance is mithyā , but it cannot be unreal or non-existent. The translation ' unreal ' for the term ' mithyā ' is not happy and right , because, such a popular translation creates some misunderstanding. Depending on this translation many philosophers of both East and West interpreted Śaṅkara's doctrine of māyā as a kind of world-negation theory. But here an Advaitin would argue that the doctrine of māyā as propounded by Śaṅkara never way out the world into the sphere of unreal. An

unreal cannot serve practical purpose. But a snake in the rope can cause fear etc. Again dream causes our pleasure or sadness. Some dream may be so harmful as to incapacitate the actual physical organs of a man. So also the world though mithyā may serve all practical purposes. The world is mithyā in the sense that it cannot be categorised either as sat or asat. The world continues to appear as long as its substratum Brahman is not directly apprehended. As after correction of illusion, the false silver vanishes into nothing, so the world turns into absolute naught .⁶⁷

In this connection we may refer that Śaṅkara maintains a distinctive view from Gauḍapāda. In his Māṇḍūkya Kārikā Gauḍapāda vividly points out the similarities between the dream world and the awaking state. It has been previously shown that Gauḍapāda was highly influenced by Buddhism. As a result we find that he refutes the objectivity of worldly existence and unhesitatingly

67. It may be noted that the absolute naughtness of the world from the transcendental point of view is very much like the śūnya of Nāgārjuna. It is true that Śaṅkara vehemently criticised Nāgārjuna's view but here he used the term śūnya of Nāgārjuna in its popular sense that leads him some misunderstanding of Nāgārjuna's philosophy. But a close study of the writings of both these philosophers reveals the fact that there is an enormous similarities between them. It has been seen in Mādhyamika-Kārikā that all dharmas or world experiences are svabhāva śūnya or devoid of any self-essence. They cannot be called either existent nor non-existent nor both and so they are called indescribable or māyā . But behind this phenomenal world there must be a Reality who is beyond all plurality. It is indescribable, for Nāgārjuna says that we cannot characterize it in empirical terms as being, non-being etc. This no doctrine attitude of Nāgārjuna should not be confused with

declares the identity of the dream-state and the awaking state.⁶⁸ But from the commentary of Śaṅkara on the Brahma-Sūtras (2.2.28), it is clear that Śaṅkara never admits the unreality of the world as Gauḍapāda suggests. In the opinion of Śaṅkara the world is false, because it has no independent essence apart from Brahman.⁶⁹ As the 'ghaṭa' (jar) is nothing but a different form of the clay, similarly the world is nothing but the projection of Brahman. And from this standpoint any kind of effect has been given up in Advaita-Vedānta .

Though in the interpretation on Māṇḍukya Kārikā Śaṅkara has made his voice in support of ajāta vāda but his main interest lies in vivartavāda, where the world^{is} considered as a super-imposed Reality. Now it seems that ajāta does not mean that the world appearance is unreal, but that it is not really originated. It

'blank phenomenism' as it is wrongly understood' by S.N. Dasgupta in his Indian Idealism (Cambridge University Press, 1933, p. 79). The difference between Nāgārjuna and Śaṅkara, in our opinion, is only the difference of emphasis. While Nagarjuna is interested to emphasize the ultimate unreality of all phenomena, Śaṅkara is more interested to prove the Ultimate Reality (Brahman).

68. " Saprayojanatā tesām svapne vipratipadyate /
Tasmādādyantavattvena mithyaiva khalu te smṛtāḥ //2.7.
- Māṇḍukya Kārikā (Op. Cit.) p. 79

and

Svapna-māye yathā dr̥ṣṭe gandharvvanagaram yathā /
Tathā viśvamidaṁ dr̥ṣṭaṁ vedānteṣu vicaskanaiḥ // - 2/31.
- Ibid p. 101.

69. Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Brahma-Sūtras in Vedānta Darśana vol.2
(Bengali tr. by Viswarupananda, Udbodhan Karyalaya, 2nd ed. 1989) pp. 408-434.

holds that there is no active creation or manifestation of the Absolute. The universe appears by the Brahman's imponderable power of māyā .

Like a Satkāryavādī Śaṅkara is of opinion that the mysterious and variegated world of our life and experience comes out from the Absolute Infinite, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss which is beyond space-time-causation. But unlike pariṇāmavādins , he maintains that this world is not evolved or produced, but seem to be so. And most probably in this sense Śaṅkara supports Gauḍapāda's theory of ajāti or non-origination. We can not say that Brahman is the cause of the world because, this would lead to distinguish Brahman from the world and Brahman would be also the subject to change. Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the whole universe but this is only from the empirical point of view where Brahman who is designated as Īśvara or Māyādhīśaḥ the possessor of the power of māyā . Māyā projects this world of plurality. But here a question arises : If Brahman is One Absolute and devoid of all differences how the world of plurality appears at all ? Śaṅkara answers this by introducing the concept of māyā which was hidden in the Vedic-Upaniṣadic literature. And here lies the importance of the doctrine of māyā .

The world which is due to māyā is beyond any categorisation like sat and asat and it is therefore named as indeterminable or anirvacanīya . On this ground Śaṅkara admits the theory of Sat-kāryavāda - that the effect must pre-exist in the cause, but ultimately the effect is not something different from the cause. That is why Śaṅkara rejects the doctrine of transformation (parināmavāda) and pleads for the doctrine of reflection (vivartavāda).

Māyā is otherwise known as prakṛti, Avyakta or Avidyā. The word ' Prakṛti ' is an adoption from the Sāṅkhya . It consists of three constituents, viz - sattva (serenity), rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia). By the help of the tamas constituent, māyā possesses the veiling or concealing power which acts as a cover. The Real is not revealed to us because of this cover.⁷⁰ Reality remains concealed to us. And owing to the projecting power (vik-ṣepa śakti) we do not only fail to categorise the Reality but we perceive the phenomena as Real. Māyā, therefore, is a ' primal matter ' from which all existence arises. This view is consistent with the Sāṅkhya cosmogonic idea. But the Sāṅkhya view of Prakṛti is distinguished from that of Advaita. In Sāṅkhya ' Prakṛti ' is called ' Pradhāna ' in the sense that unlike the prakṛti of Vedānta it is an independent category from which the real world is evolved. It is not conceived as the projecting power of any conscious entity. But in the philosophy of Śaṅkara the principle māyā is called prakṛti in the sense that it envelops the Reality and gives rise to the projection of something other than Reality. The world for the Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta , therefore, is an appearance, an effect of māyā or ajñāna.

From what has been discussed thus far in this chapter, it is clear that the main contention of Śaṅkarite Advaitic philosophy is to establish the Supremacy of Ātman and to emphasise on the Upaniṣadic principle of absolute identity of the individualised soul (Jīva) and Brahman or Ātman (Transcendental self). The allegation that Śaṅkarite Advaita philosophy represents a drastic denial

70. Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi , Verse No. 139 (Op. Cit .) p.95.

of mundane state altogether also seems to be an improper understanding of Śāṅkarite teaching. A close concentration on the Kārikā " Brahma satya jagamithyā , jīva-bramhaiva nāparaḥ " - reveals the main intention of the Advaitins. According to Advaita Philosophy , only after the realisation of non-dual Ātman (or Brahman), the nature of the world cognised would be different. The jīva (individual self) is not real as jīva as such, but as Ātman or Brahman . When the veil of ignorance (avidyā) is destroyed after self-realisation, the jīva sees himself identical with the Transcendental Self or Brahman which includes everything (Sarvaṁ khalvidam Brahma). The world as conceived apart from Brahman is no longer real to an enlightened person (jīvanmukta). Śāṅkara differs from Gaudapāda in this respect. For Gaudapāda, the world is no more real than the dreaming state. Even the world appearance has no importance to him. That is why, he has no hesitation to say that ' There is neither any production, nor any destruction, there is no bondage, no one who is striving and no one who wants to be released.⁷¹ That which neither exists in the beginning, nor in the end, can not be entitled to exist in the present , hence its appearance must be false. Śāṅkara on the contrary admits the dissimilarities of the world and the dream. The world in the Śāṅkarite Advaita Vedānta is not eliminated, but only transcended. The phenomenal world is only transcended by the realisation of the ātman-Brahman identity.⁷² Śāṅkara philosophically thus advocates Vivartavāda , which admits the appearance of Reality. Appearance becomes mithyā when the Reality is realised.

71. Māṇḍukya Kārikā (Op. Cit.) p. 103.

72. It may be noted that Śāṅkara does not ignore change. He admits

It is indeed true that the sole contention of Śaṅkara's philosophy is to establish the non-duality of Absolute and to bring a harmony between the apparent contradictions of different Upaniṣadic statements regarding Reality. With his subtle intellectual power Śaṅkara refutes all kinds of duality. He undoubtedly has laid more stress upon monistic view of Reality and is not primarily interested in the status of the world. This has been indicated in his commentary on Aitareya Upaniṣad . He remarks "by knowing the nature of the universe (the stories of creation etc.) nothing is gained spiritually ; but by realizing the Unitary, that is, Absolute-nature of Ātman , which is the self of all, one attains Immortality, that is perfection and spiritual freedom (mukti)."⁷³ Śaṅkara thus prescribes Śravaṇa, Manana and Nididhyāsaṇa

change in a particular sense. There is change in forms, but not in substance. The illustration given by Śaṅkara in Brahma-Sūtra—Bhāṣya 2.1.18, is read thus " Indeed Devadatta, with folded hands and feet or with the same extended, does not become another entity only because an alternation of form is evidenced. He is recognised as the self-same man." The different forms of the substance are indifferent from the substance itself. As we may call it a jar, or a plate, the clay remains the same. Any kind of change in form does not mean change in substance. D.M. Datta in his article ' Some Realistic Aspects of the Philosophy of Śaṅkara ' has beautifully elaborated this point. The article is included in Recent Indian Philosophy (ed. Kalidas Bhattacharyya, Progressive Publishers, 1963 , p. 347).

73. - " Na hi sṛṣṭi ākhyāyikādi pariññānānt kimcit phalaṃ iṣyate ; Aikātmya-svarūpa pariññānāt tu amṛtattvaṃ phalaṃ." One may see here Swami Mukhyānanda's book ' Acharya Śaṅkara ' (Op.Cit.) Appendix III , p. lv.

for preparation of self-realization . He believes in the gradual spiritual upgradation of individual beings.

But for the enlightened person who has realised that Brahman is the only Reality and that Jīva (individualised soul) is identical with Brahman or Paramātman (Absolute), the world is false (mithyā) and the so-called scriptural advices, i.e. śravaṇa, manana etc. and injunctions are no more necessary for him . In Śaṅkara's Philosophy , these advices and injunctions are just like ladders which must be thrown away after the goal is reached. These are ordered devices (upāya) only to disclose the relative nature of the worldly existence. Being spiritually disciplined by these devices, an individual being may gradually be purified in thinking, feeling and willing. A spiritual seeker is advised thus to cultivate the qualities like tranquillity, self control and purity under the guidance of a spiritual teacher in a prescribed manner. This shows that although Śaṅkara's chief intention was to show the supremacy of Paramātman and Its non-difference with Jīvātman, he was quite aware of the good qualities for a balanced good life in society. There are several verses in the Vivekacūḍāmaṇiḥ where Śaṅkara highly speaks about the glory-ness of being human.⁷⁴ But he cannot grant this worldly life any final status. In order to achieve the goal of life, for Śaṅkara, we must proceed towards, we must know , the Ultimatum ; otherwise our human life would be meaningless. According to Śaṅkarite Advaita Vedānta , Brahman is the only Reality. The world is māyā , a false

74. Vivekacūḍāmaṇiḥ : verses - 2,3,5. (Op. Cit.) pp. 2-4.

appearance of the Reality. It is not non-existent, since it is the appearance of the Reality. It is false because it cannot be categorised as real or unreal. The world is a case of superimposition (adhyāsa) where Brahman is super-imposed (adhyasta). The cognition of world is just like the illusory cognition of ' silver in a piece of shell ' or ' a snake in a rope ' . In the concluding verse of ' Vivekacūḍāmaṇiḥ ' Śaṅkara very confidently offers great assurance that his teaching of 'Advaya-Brahma' would be a great source of inspiration and consolation for the worldly people suffering from the scorching sun-rays of threefold misery and are athirst for the saving waters of Truth leading to the eradication of all miseries and to Spiritual Liberation.⁷⁵

75. Ibid , p. 369.

CHAPTER - 3

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SWAMI

VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY :

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY

(12th January, 1863 - 4th July, 1902)

I. Some preliminary Observations about Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy :

Swami, Vivekananda an inspiring messenger and a tireless activist is mostly known as a preacher and social reformer, a passionate nationalist who gave a new life to the national movement of India. Though not an academic philosopher in the technical sense of the term, Vivekananda was profoundly impressed by the works of western philosophical literature. But his thoughts and ideas that are expressed in his various lectures, letters, essays and reflections represent a philosophy, a philosophy that is based on Vedānta , but at a time his advocacy of Vedānta differs itself from the traditional Vedānta and has some distinctive characteristics. Vivekananda though adheres to ~~the~~ Śāṅkarite Advaita, does not seem to have walked on the Śāṅkarite way of admitting Advaita Brahman as the only Reality and the world of diversity as unreal. In his practical vedānta a reconciliation of jñāna (knowledge) with bhakti (devotion) is found. On account of this, Vivekananda is not ready to accept the Śāṅkarite interpretation that describes God (Īśvara) as the product of māyā . For him there is no intrinsic difference between the concept of Absolute and that of God. His philosophy is advaitic in so far as he holds " he who has attained to this conception of Oneness, has no more delusion "¹. But he does not wholly refuse to admit the role of

1. Swami Vivekananda : Jñāna Yoga (Mayavati, Advaita Ashram, 1930)

upāsana or devotion. He observes that the common people are not in a position to go for total renunciation and are unable to comprehend the abstract reality of Absolute. He suggests the way of devotion for them because of their having over-tone of feeling and emotion. According to Vivekananda both the ways of knowledge (jñāna) and devotion (bhakti) lead to the same end of Brahma-realisation. In view of this before going through the philosophical implications of his speeches and writings, we must remember the picture of our country at his time. That was a time when India was passing a crucial moment. That was a time of growing friction between the Indian people and the British colonialists. A major portion of our countrymen was under poverty and carrying the curse of caste-system. A wave of materialism swept a group of people of our country. They preferred to live according to the ideals of western civilisation. At that crucial moments we heard the roars of Vivekananda " Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached ". He completely realised that the people who were immersed in materialism cannot be attracted at all by the view that the world in which we live and move is nothing but false . He clearly understood that this world-negation theory could not release his poor countrymen from their poverty and the bondage of untouchability. He preached such a philosophy which is not only for the intellectual but also for men in the street. Here lies the uniqueness of Vivekananda. He gave a new interpretation of the Advaita Vedānta which may be called Neo-Vedāntism. The deepest influence upon his thought is obviously of Ancient Hindu philosophy; but it is interesting to note that in a certain sense Vivekananda is influenced by Buddha's life and ideas. He remarks " Buddhism is historically the most important religion, historically and not philosophically - because

it was the most tremendous religious movement that the world ever saw, the most gigantic spiritual wave ever to burst upon human society. There is no civilisation on which its effect has not been felt in some way or other "2.

The religion of Buddha, Vivekananda believes, inspite of its difference from the traditional religion, overflows the whole world for its marvellous love, a love not only for all men but of all living beings. Buddha's universal love for all beings moved Swamiji. For him, Buddha was the boldest preacher of morality, the greatest teacher of equality that the world ever saw. The concept that attracts Swamiji mostly is Buddha's concept of equality of human beings and equal right of them to the knowledge and wisdom. Swamiji thinks " Buddha was the great preacher of equality. Every man and woman has the same right to attain spirituality - that was his teaching. The difference between the priests and the other castes be abolished. Even the lowestⁿ entitled to the highest attainments ".³ It is the gist of Vedas also, Vivekananda opines. The great statement of Upanisad " All is Brahman " also carries the idea of same equality that Buddha teaches throughout his life. Buddha's love for humanity and service towards people inspired Vivekananda. This concept acted as an ' electrifying spirit ' on him. This concept carries the equal weight like the Upanisadic thought ' Thou art that ' - individual self is identified with God. His tribute to Buddha was so high that he could say " Buddha may or may not believe in God; that does not

2. The complete works of Swami Vivekananda Henceforth C.W.V : vol.8.

(Advaita Ashram , Mayabati , 1985) p. 92

3. Ibid , Vol. 4 , p. 98.

matter to me ".⁴ The whole life of Buddha shows the fact clearly that a man can attain to the highest goal through the performance of action. Buddha achieved the highest truth through his tremendous love for all living beings. He did everything for others and absolutely nothing for himself. In an age when men and priest were engaged in discussion the essence of the deity, Buddha discovered what people had overlooked, that misery or evil exists in our life and the cause of our misery is our desire and our selfishness. When the world becomes unselfish all that misery and evil will vanish. When there was too much doctrine, too much belief in our religion, too much rational superstition, a change was needed. Such doctrine produced evil, and a reformation was necessary and Buddha brought such reformation.

But inspite of his highest tribute to Buddha, Vivekananda is not ready to endorse all his thoughts and philosophy. In a context Swamiji says " The life of Buddha has an especial appeal. All my life I have been very fond of Buddha, but not of his doctrine ".⁵ To Swamiji the paths showed by Buddha is a feable attempt at solving human problems. The giving up of the individual self and the non-existent of it makes Vivekananda disagreed to accept Buddhism in its entirety, as he has also great sympathy for the other gigantic philosophy of Advaita Vedānta. Vivekananda realised the danger inherent in the thought of Buddhism. The Buddhist thought in later days was unable to initiate and illumine man by its master's high wisdom

4. Ibid , pp. 136-137.

5. Ibid , Vol. 2 , p. 352.

into despair and desperation and it was proved to be devastating for the society and as a result of this a degradation of all aspects takes place.⁶ Swamiji minds " The most hideous ceremonies, the most horrible, the most obscene books that human hands ever wrote or the human brain ever conceived, the most bestial forms that ever passed under the name of religion, have all been the creation of degraded Buddhism ".⁷ The entire society was turned into the vortex of degradation in the Buddhist time. It was Śāṅkara who ably turned back the mind of man to the spiritual principle of Vedānta. Swami Vivekananda was influenced by the intellect of Śāṅkara who laid stress upon one Ultimate Reality - who is Brahman. The philosophy of Vivekananda is a combination of the ethical approach of Buddhism with the metaphysical vision of Śāṅkara. His Neo-Vedāntism is a philosophy of head and heart, it is the philosophy where he tries to unite the intellect of Śāṅkara with the humanism of Buddha. He wanted to enroll the people in a spiritual militia.

It is not out of context to note that the whole bulk of Vivekananda's philosophic literature comes as an outcome of his unfathomable love for mankind. That is why perhaps he did not bother to evolve any system of philosophy like Kant or Hegel , although the rationalistic and logistic thought currents of western culture has been

6. When Māhāyāna Buddhist tradition lost its vitality, " the monasteries became rich centres of vested interests, and their discipline became lax. Magic and superstition crept into the popular forms of worship " - Jawaharlal Nehru : The Discovery of India ; (Oxford, 1989, 9th impression., J.N. Memorial Fund,) p. 179.

7. Ibid , Vol. 3, (Op. Cit.) pp. 264-265.

reconciled with the basic tenets of Vedānta in his neo-vedānta or as he pleases to call it ' Practical Vedānta '. It is also true that the concept of māyā occupies a very crucial position in the vedāntic literature. But before any kind of discussion of māyā in Vivekananda's thought it is worthwhile to be acquainted not only with the salient features of his philosophy but also with the impact of his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, in shaping his thought and activity. Because Vivekananda's understanding of māyā has been shaped by his general philosophical understanding of the traditional Vedānta philosophy and his handling of the Western Philosophy, frankly speaking he is immensely influenced by Sri Ramakrishna and that is why as it appears even without contradicting the fundamental vedāntic contention he could give an interpretation of māyā that suits the common needs of the day.

II. The primal thought of Sri Ramakrishna and its impact on

Swami Vivekananda :-

It is stated earlier, that the basic concept of Vivekananda's Philosophy is to be found in the life and thoughts of his Guru , Sri Ramakrishna. An inkling of the deepest trend of Indian culture has been a dominating factor in the life of Sri Ramakrishna as well as Vivekananda. Their lives, to put it in philosophical epigram, are reaffirmations of the great message that the highest value of life lies in living realisation of the Spirit at its highest, here and now in this very life. The main outline of Neo-Vedānta was drawn by

Sri Ramakrishna. Vivekananda claimed himself as the voice of Parahamsa, he was merely a faithful steward exactly carrying out his master's order. In his own words : " If there has been anything achieved by me, by my thoughts or deeds, if from my lips has ever fallen one word that has helped anyone in the world, I lay no claim to it; it was his All that has been weak, has been mine, and all that has been life-giving , strengthening, pure, and holy, has been his inspiration, his word - and he himself " ⁸. Sārādā Devī described Naren, as an instrument of Thākur who makes him write these words for inspiring his children and devotees for doing his work for doing good all the world. ⁹

Ramakrishna was no scholar and hence he can not be called a philosopher in the technical sense, yet he possessed the power of attracting the people even the intellectual like Keshab Chandra Sen, Vidyāsāgar, Bankim Chandra Chattyopādhyay and others great thinkers. His spiritual thoughts that flowed out of the depth of his realisation amazed them. He was a man of realisation which is far from the realisation of the so-called educated person. Keshab Chandra Sen described him as a faithful and most devoted mediator of the perfections of the One formless, infinite Deity, though he worshipped Śiva, Kāli, Rāma , Kriṣṇa .

Ramakrishna was a god-intoxicated man and god is the highest realisation of a human life. God is one, not many, Ramakrishna would not allow any dualism, but he did not rule out the room for personal God. To him the indeterminate Absolute was not basically different from the personal God. These two are only different aspects of the

8. As quoted by Romain Rolland in his The Life of Vivekananda ,
(Mayavati, Advaita Ashrama , 1979) p. 117.

9. Swami Gambhirananda : The Gospel of the Holy Mother : Śri Sārādā

same Reality. As ' ice ' and its ' water ' are intrinsically the same thing, in the same way the ' personal ' and the ' impersonal ' are the same Being. The absolute could be realised by only the perfect Samādhi. Like the Ākāśa, Brahman is un-modified. Fire appears to be white or red while we throw a white or red substance into it despite the fact that the fire has no colour of its own. There is no dualism between Brahman and Śakti. When He ceases to create, to preserve and to destroy He is called Śakti or Prakṛti and when He is inactive, He is Brahman, the impersonal - who is beyond any description, any word.

Ramakrishna had a firm faith in Advaitism which helped him to go straight into the heart of humanity and to put an end to all controversy and antagonism between different philosophical and religious thoughts and systems. For him different religions are but different paths leading to the same goal. He said that every religion is wholly true. Different religions are but different approaches to God.¹⁰

Devi (Sri R.K. Math, Madras 9, 1984) p. 179.

10. In the thoughts of Ramakrishna religion is not like a flower vase in which different species and coloured of flowers plucked from different trees remain. So he did not preach any universal religion which is the outcome of a synthesis of different religious system. Moghal Emperor Ākbar tried to establish a universal religion named 'Din-i-Ilāhi' acceptable to everybody. But it failed to survive after the death of Ākbar. It was based on unsound reasoning. In the opinion of Amiya Kumar Majumder : "universal religion is neither the product of ratiocination or discursive understanding nor an amalgam of the vital elements of different religions produced electically. For one thing, the universal kept apart from the particulars, is a meaningless

Ramakrishna regards that dualism and qualified non-dualism were not sharply opposed and exclusive ways of realisation of truth, but they are different steps leading to the same goal. They are complementary to one another, but not contradictory. The realisation of one's own self in others is the mark of an Advaitin. Ramakrishna feels that the Advaita Sādhana prescribes that men are only outwardly different from one another, all men are basically manifestations of God or Self.

The universe, for Sri Ramakrishna, is not in a state of flux, Brahman has manifested itself as the universe. Brahman and the world are not different. The śakti is represented as the Divine Mother. The same being when^k is viewed from the standpoint of a jñānī, it is called indeterminate but when it is viewed from the standpoint of a bhakta, it becomes having forms and visible. The Brahman minus the universe will be weightless. To him the world is not false. He believes in the essential identity of the two. This identity is like a salt doll when it is dissolved into the sea. Dr. S.C. Chatterjee writes " The Upaniṣadic texts , ' All this is Brahman ' does not mean for him (Ramakrishna) as it does for some Advaitins, that there is not all but only Brahman. For him all are, and are Brahman in different forms ".¹¹ Ramakrishna being a man of love and renunciation taught us the universality or harmony of all different religions.

abstraction . . . ". Understanding Vivekananda , (Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar , 1972) p. 14.

11. Classical Indian philosophies , their synthesis in the philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna by S.C. Chatterjee, p. 112 as quoted by T.S. Dutta in A study of Philosophy of Vivekananda, Sribhumi Publishing Company, 1982 , pp. 123-124.

The life and teaching of Sri Ramakrishna influenced Swami Vivekananda largely. Swamiji was able to find the harmonious unity of three schools of Vedānta in the light of the thought of Ramakrishna. Like his master he declares that the three stages of Vedānta philosophy- the Dvaita,¹² Viśiṣṭadvaita and Advaita - each one is necessary. These are three stages of spiritual growth in man. He synthesised these three apparently contradictory schools of Vedānta in a harmonious manner.

III. God and Absolute in the thought of Vivekananda :

Sri Ramakrishna has taught him the nonduality of God-head, and like an Advaitin Vivekananda regards that the reality is one absolute Brahman, who is indivisible, who can not be divided. It is beyond space, time and causation. They arise on account of our way of thought. Absolute can not be attributed by any qualities ; only it can be described as Sat, Cit, Ānanda.¹³ The ultimate Reality is Infinite

-
12. The term ' dualism ' in Indian philosophy is logically different from the European. In European sense the term denotes a philosophical doctrine which believes two opposite substances material and spiritual irreducible to each other, to be the source of all being. But in Indian Philosophy ' dualism ' means recognising the existence of two worlds - the world of essence and the world of phenomena.
13. Vivekananda's concept of Sat (existence) and Cit (consciousness) are similar to the Orthodox view, but the concept of ' Ānanda ' carries an enriched meaning by him. To him ' love ' is the essential core of Bliss. This concept of ānanda brings about a spiritual movement which would recognise Divinity in every creature and he tells us to worship of ' Śiva in Jīva '.

Existence, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss. He is without a name, without a form.

Vivekananda regards that Vedānta leads us towards one thought, the unity of all existence, the unity of all things - 'Knowing which everything else becomes known'. The concept of monothesis¹⁴ that develops in ^{the} Vedas transformed into the concept of all pervading one that in the Vedānta Philosophy which is not a systematised thought of one man like Kapila's philosophy but a series of books produced at different times and all streams of thought are found in them.

As an Advaitin, Vivekananda speaks of an indeterminate, impersonal Being who is the only reality. But it is his master Sri Ramakrishna whose life and thoughts enable Swamiji to combine Abstract Monism and Theism. As a result of it, we find that in his philosophy two currents of ' Advaita Vedānta ' and Bhakti-cult ' flow almost side by side. He does not accept the orthodox view that Brahman is only transcendent, pure homogeneous consciousness, transcendent in nature . Swamiji asserts that the Impersonal Brahman when is looked upon by the finite mind He becomes creator, sustainer and the destroyer of the universe. The same Brahman is viewed as supremely good.

14. Vivekananda analysed that the Vedas , which represent the most ancient literature are addressed to a large number of deities like Indra, Varuna, Mitra etc. But it is also found that each deity is taken or treated as the manifestation of the Supreme Being and not contenders for supremacy. The Vedic monotheism gives a deity as a ruler of the universe and a moral guide.

God is not a creation of māyā . God and absolute are not two. Such a distinction arises from our ignorance and our limited ways of apprehension.

Vivekananda understood that the religious urges and aspiration of common man could be satisfied by a personal God. Vivekananda gives a metaphysical attribute to God. He thinks that love is a method of " the realisation of the divinity through devotion to, and love of a Personal God ".¹⁵ The whole universe with its vastness, harmony and the grandeur lead us to suppose that there must be an architect, an intelligent designer of it, an ancient poet , a poet who writes the whole universe with His Infinite Bliss.¹⁶ He feels no need for making a gap between God and Absolute. He recognises the value of the path of bhakti which accepts the personal God as its main postulate and this path leads to the highest goal. A question may arise in this context : Is this path in accordance with the Advaita Vedānta ? Here we must remember the fact once again that in the view of Sri Ramakrishna the same reality is nameless and formless. Brahman for the Jñāni or the man of philosophic insight , the Ātman or the pure self for the Yogīn who is in meditation and Bhagavān or Personal God who is in devotion. Like his master he accepts the personal God as the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind. He says that the human consciousness is one of the elements in the make up of all the objects of our perception and conception, internal as well as external. Taken in this light, Īśvara, in spite of his being anthro-pomorphic, is not unreal. Bhakti Yoga is a path of love. There are two stages of Bhakti : - (a) The preparatory or gaunī and (b) the

15. Ibid., Vol. V (Op. Cit) p. 292.

16. Jñāna Yoga (Op. Cit.) p. 148.

supreme or parā . In the former stage there remains a danger of fanaticism which brings hatred and jealousy in the heart of devotee that we find in Hinduism or Mohammedanism or Christianity. But in the upper stage such a fanaticism vanishes and there is no fear of any hideous manifestation of fanaticism. " Here there is no violence, nothing to give up, nothing to tear off, as it were, from ourselves, nothing from which we have violently to separate ourselves." ¹⁷ In this stage the full blaze of love comes, the devotee becomes one with the infinite, he realises the beautiful and inspiring truth that love, the lover and the beloved are one. Vivekānanda regards that what Vedānta teaches to us is that to take the whole world is full of God. It is He who is in the child, in the wife, and in the husband. It is He who is in the good and no less in the bad. He exists in the sin and in the sinner as well. Everything is covered with the Lord. At the commencement of one of the oldest of the Upa-
niṣads we read : " whatever exists in this universe is to be covered with the Lord ". ¹⁸ Vivekananda's conception of God is basically based on this thought.

Echoing the voice of Śaṅkara, Vivekananda admits that Brahman who is perfectly formless, qualityless and distinctionless is the only reality but it is true that such conception may be achieved through constant devotion, faith, constant meditation of a personal God. But he thinks that the concept of personal God stands on a better base when strengthened by the concept of Impersonal God. A

17. Ibid. Vol. III, p. 71.

18. Īśāvāsyamidam sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyām jagat ;
 Tena tyaktena bhujñīthā mā gr̥dhaḥ kasya sviddhanam.
Īśa Upaniṣad (The R.K. Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park,)
 Tr. by Swami Lokeshwarananda.- Verse No. 1, p. 5.

generalisation ending in the concept of personal God can never be universally acceptable. For when we call for a personal God, He must be attributed by all merciness and all goodness. But we find that the world is full of good and evil. That follows that eventually there is a personal Devil who is the source of everything that is evil. But this metaphysical dualism goes against the teaching of the Upaniṣads. Hence we must admit an impersonal God who is beyond good and evil. Good and evil are related to the phenomenal world. What is good to me, and what I call bad, other may call it vice-versa. The fire that burns the child, may cook a good meal for a starving man. By the concept of impersonal God the personal God will remain but on a better basis. The personal God is the highest reading that can be attained to of that impersonal by the human intellect. It was Vivekananda who brings out the teachings of the Advaita that remains hidden in the scriptures and the monasteries in everyday life. He thinks that the sense of 'unity-in-diversity' is not a theoretical dogma merely. The worship of humanity for him is a programme of spiritual practice which can lead a man to the highest goal that is the goal of 'God-realisation'.

IV. The Nature of the world - the cosmos :

The cosmos which was rejected by Śāṅkara as unreal gets the status of Brahman itself in the hands of Vivekananda. He tries to remove the metaphysical gap which is created by the Śāṅkarite Vedantins between Brahman and the world and that causes insurmountable difficulties in explaining the relation between them. He recognises both as real. In his philosophy the famous assertion of Śāṅkara

" Brahman is all " is transformed into " All this is nothing but Brahman ". He gives the world also a status of reality. As an Advaitin , God is the only real principle to him, and therefore, creation is nothing but the expression of the Infinite in finite forms.¹⁹

Vivekananda expressed that the struggle between materialism and idealism is a result of misunderstanding. For him, mind and matter are homogeneous. In his opinion this homogeneity is the substance, the reality. To explain this view he gave an example : " Take two different substances, say a piece of glass and a piece of wood, grind them up together fine enough, reduce them till there is nothing more to reduce, and the substance remaining appears homogeneous. All substance in the last analysis are one. . . . ".²⁰ For him it is only a higher materialism to believe that mind is all, that thought is all.

19. It is interesting to note in the passing that Rabindranath also obliterates any exclusive distinction between the finite and the infinite. All the evolutionary stages for Rabindranath, are finite expressions of what is infinite. In the Gītāñjali we read thus :

" Thou, the Infinite in the finite,
singst thine melody . . .

.

it is so sweet.

With the self-elevation (Lilā) of
thine formless beauty,

The kingdom of heart blossoms in
variegated hue

--- fragrance, song and rhythm ".

(as quoted by Dilip Kumar Mohanta in his article entitled :
Rabindranath on Man and his freedom, Tattva-Darśana , Vol. 2,
No. 4 , Madras, 1985-86.)

20. The complete works of Vivekananda , vol. VI (Op.Cit.) pp. 91-92.

He said that in a certain sense he also was a materialist, since he believed in only reality, and that was what the materialists wanted to say; the difference is that what they call matter, he called it God. The materialists admit that out of matter everything has come, whereas he said that all that created have come out of Brahman. He opines that, if the world is a means towards attaining the next, how can it become unreal ?

In order to illustrate the creation Swamiji resorts to a diagramme²¹ -

(a) The Absolute

(c) Time

Space

Causation

(b) The universe

The Absolute (a) has become the universe (b) by passing through Time, space, and causation. (c) The concept of the universe, he explained, includes not only the material world but also the mental, the spiritual world, heavens and earth and in fact, everything that exists here. Mind is the name of a change, and body is the name of another change and so on, and our universe is composed of all these changes.

The Absolute in the view of Vivekananda is beyond space, time and causation. The idea of space exists with the presence of "external changes" in the universe, hence it can not be in Absolute; similarly the idea of time can not be there as it exists with obligatory presence of mind and thought and the Absolute being strictly one the

21. Jñāna Yoga , (Op. cit) pp. 119-120.

question of motion and causation can not be arisen there. All these begin to operate after the degeneration of the Absolute into the phenomenal and not before. Our will, our desire, and all these things always come after that. Space, Time, Causation are mere forms in the philosophy of Vivekananda. They are not independent existence. The idea of time changes with every change of our mind. It is completely relative. The same time may appear to one as very long, and to another as very short. It is entirely dependent on our state of mind. In the same way the spatial dimensions depend on our angles of vision. It is so with causation. It is also dependent on our mind. What is cause from one point of view, it is effect from another point of view. It follows that space, time and causation have no independent entities. Vivekananda says that they are just forms in and through which the creation takes place. But it does not mean that he regards them as false or unreal.²² He points out the analogy of ocean and waves. Though the waves are not other than the ocean, when the waves subside, the forms vanish. They are the same as the ocean, but this does not indicate that the forms of the waves are false. As long as the waves exist, the forms are there and we are bound to see them.

22. Vivekananda was very fond of Kantian writings. It may be that Vivekananda was influenced by Kant. Like Kant he admits Space, Time and Causation are mere forms which are not transcendently real. They do not have anyⁱⁿ⁻dependent existence. We can not conceive them other than the worldly objects. We cannot have any idea of abstract space or abstract time or abstract causation. But like Kant Vivekananda does not regard space and time as apriori forms of intuitions.

Vivekananda asserts the reality of the world. The world to him is not an illusion. He reacted tangently against any attempt to consider the world as illusion. He feels that it is not the intention of Vedānta to say that the world is unreal. The world has no permanent value or character, it is constantly changing and varying, transitory and temporary.²³ For Vivekananda the universe is the manifestation of the Absolute. The Absolute is present everywhere, but He does not manifest itself equally in all the levels of existence. The command " Love every one as your own self " becomes meaningful when the oneness of Being pervades the universe. We then easily understand that while injuring another I am injuring myself, in loving another I am loving myself. The narrow individual ego that creates hatred, jealousy, misery and other evils vanishes when this oneness of Being is realised. A potential divinity that is hidden in human being determines his course of progress. Swamiji says that man never makes progress from error to truth but from lower truth to higher truth. He represents a theory of evolution which speaks of a gradual transformation of man from its limited finite nature to the infinite existence-consciousness-bliss.

23. Sri Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyay comments , " The world is not asat, non-existent because it is verily a fact of experience, as the Vedānta-Sūtra expressly declares ' Nā bhāva upalabdhaḥ '. It is mithyā only in the sense that it has got a superious reality. It's reality is not genuine, because it does not be-
 long to it, but is only delegated to it by something else . . .
 Even those who advocate the reality of the world can never assert that the world is of the same order of reality as the Absolute " - Studies in the Upaniṣadas , (Sanskrit College, 1960) p. 56.

His theory of evolution is not equal to Darwin's theory of evolution which considers the progress as a result of struggle for existence and competition, but according to Swamiji evolution is the progression of the rudimentary elements into their more clearly expressed forms. In the final stage of progress man realises himself as Brahman, identifies himself as universal consciousness. But Vivekananda is not swallowed by an all engulfing Absolute. For Vivekananda the finite individual is a manifestation of Brahman. He says " we now see that all various forms of cosmic energy, such as matter, thought, force, intelligence and so forth, are simply the manifestations of that cosmic energy".²⁴ He asserts that the whole universe is not a creation but an evolution, an evolution of nature leading step by step to the manifestation of the Absolute. Modern Science and Advaita conclude that no external beings or existences are required to explain what is going on in the universe. The modern law of evolution shows that everything comes from within. It follows that every evolution must have an involution. We can only get the amount of energy out of a machine when we have put that into it, otherwise the machine cannot work. So nothing can be produced out of nothing. Vivekananda takes the doctrine of evolution from Patañjali's theory on " in filling up of nature ".²⁵ The struggle

24. Jñānayogo , (Op. Cit.) p. 241.

25. The Complete Works of Vivekananda , vol.5 (Op. Cit.) pp.277-278
It means " The change of the specie into another is attained by the infilling of nature ", i.e. we are progressing from one specie to another, and that man is the highest species.

for life, the struggle for existence and natural selection they all are rigorously applied in the lower order of nature, in the human order, all these are in a retrogression rather than a contribution to progress.

The involution and evolution are going on through the whole of nature. The whole series of evolution from the lowest manifestation of life to the highest, indicates, that it must have been the involution of something else. Swamiji believes that ' the perfect man ', ' the freeman ' ' the God man ' involved in the cell of the protoplasm and the cosmic intelligence evolves itself, until it reaches in the end of perfectman that man called ^{is} the ' Christman ' by the christians the ' Buddha man ' by the Buddhist and the ' Free ' by the Yogis. Thus every evolute of the universe, either it is matter or mind or consciousness is only the manifestation of the Absolute. He thinks that man is the highest being in the universe. The individual is not an illusory being but a real one with the constituent of body, mind and soul. By individuality Swamiji says that we are not yet individuals. It is the only Spirit

Swamiji regards that the struggle for existence theory is neither the cause nor the effect, but as simple as a thing on the way. Any kind of competition or struggle cannot bring any progress for the man. Through competition one may conquer, but at the same time thousands are deprived. It may not be a healthy sign of any civilized society. Swamiji says that when there is a fire in a theatre only a few can escape. Most of the audiences would be crushed. Therefore, struggle remains only through our ignorance, it is not necessary for our progress.

that is the individual and we are trying to express this individuality. The changes that are going on are evolutions of nature and manifestation of spirit. Swamiji illustrates : " suppose there is a screen ~~from~~ hiding you from me, in which there is a small hole through which I can see some of the faces : before me, just a few faces. Now suppose the hole begins to grow larger and larger, and as it does so, more and more of the screen before me reveals itself and when at last the whole screen has disappeared, I stand face to face with you all. You did not change at all in this case ; it was the whole that was evolving, and you were gradually manifesting yourselves ".²⁶ Nature is like that screen. It is the God, the purity, the infinity that manifests itself more and more within our own self. The human life is the great centre, the wonderful poise, and the wonderful opportunity to realise that purity, that perfection and it is the great truth that this human birth is the greatest birth we can have.

Naturally a very pertinent question may be raised here : If the world is as real as Brahman, the Brahman being the all-inclusive only reality and the world and Brahman are homogeneous what is the implication of saying it māyā ? Does Vivekananda admit the world as māyā and if yes, in what sense ? The forthcoming section will discuss some of these types of queries.

26. C.W.V. , Vol. II, (Op. Cit) p. 81.

V. Māyā is a statement of fact explained :

The doctrine of māyā is introduced by the Orthodox vedāntins in order to solve the problem as to how ' One ' becomes many. This particular issue is approached by Swami Vivekananda from a rather different standpoint. He preferred to provide a practical application to the Vedāntic doctrine of māyā rather than to go into the details of the theoretical aspect of it. According to Swamiji, the world is not to be denied. Men are the greatest God that ever was or ever will be. The motto of an Advaitin is " All is Truth ". Romain Rolland says : " He (Swamiji) does not reject any one of the proposed attempts at explanation, but from each he seeks to extract the grain of permanent reality ".²⁷

From this standpoint Vivekananda's views regarding the concept of māyā is to be understood. The concept of māyā is neither idealism nor realism, even it is not a theory. He regards it a simple statement of facts of what we are and what we see around us.²⁸

The term ' māyā ' has been used sometimes as a power or Śakti by virtue of which God can create the world of names and forms. This power like the magical powers, does not affect Brahman . Again when it is said that the ' world is māyā ', it is used to express the indescribable nature of the world which is not sat or asat.

27. The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel, (Op. Cit.)
p. 180.

28. C.W.V. , Vol. 2 (Op. Cit.) p. 89.

Vivekananda is in ^{the} same place with ^{the} Śāṅkarite followers who admit that māyā as a power of the creator, he also believes that māyā is the principle of change, a śakti which makes creation possible. But he goes far from them where they describe māyā as a power that creates illusion, it is that power on account of which man thinks this illusory multiplicity of the world as real. In the thought of Swamiji, the term ' māyā ' is not to be used in this sense. His concept of māyā does not negate the world at all. In other words, on the contrary to ^{the} traditional Śāṅkarite interpretation that is, world negation theory, Swamiji's interpretation negates the theory that negates the reality of the world.

Vivekananda is of opinion that the term ' māyā ' has been manipulated by most of our philosophers. It is used generally to denote illusion or dellusion which is not correct. The theory of māyā was manipulated a little by Buddha in the sense of Idealism. Though Vivekananda does not mention the name of Śāṅkara as a thinker who uses the word māyā as illusion, but it is evident from his writings that Swamiji never accepts the world in which we live in as illusion as held by ^{the} Śāṅkarites, rather he grants relative status of the world. To him what is real (Brahman) is manifested in the multidimensional hues in the world. The manifestation itself as a matter of fact is not different from the manifested. It is monism, since it recognises Brahman as the only reality. The world is only the evolutionary form of the involutionary Reality.

We get the world only through the doubtful medium of the mind and senses. Our mind is limited, it can not go beyond certain boundaries. It is the very condition of our knowledge that no man can go

beyond the limits that are put upon him by the laws of time, space and causation. The world only exists in relation to them. If they change, it also changes. We see this world with our five senses, but if we had another sense, it will appear to us as something different . It has therefore no unchangable, immovable, absolute reality. It is an undefinable mixture of reality and appearance. Our whole life is a contradiction. In his lecture entitled "Māyā and Illusion " he quoted from the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad " Know nature to be māyā and the Ruler of this māyā is the Lord Himself ".²⁹ In the early stage whenever it is said that the world is māyā, at once people get the idea that the world is an illusion. But the māyā which forms one of the pillars on which the Vedānta rests , Vivekananda thinks, is neither idealism nor realism, nor is it a theory.

For Vivekananda the phenomenal world has a relative existence. It is a mixture of being and becoming , of existence and non-existence. There is always a contradiction in knowledge. We think that we can know everything, but our limitation of knowledge is a fact that can not be denied. All our work is in a circle, we can not go beyond that circle. Death is ⁿinevitable end of everything, all our skills, our progress, our achievement, our varieties and reforms are ended when death comes, yet we desire to live, we think we shall live eternally. Yudhiṣṭhira , one of the eminent characters of the Mahābhārata was once asked " what is the most surprising thing in this world " ? He replied " Everyday people are dying around us and

29. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.10. (Op.Cit.) P.734.

yet men hope that they will never die ". It is a statement of fact and Vivekananda remarks, this is māyā . Again, good and bad are not two cut and dried, absolutely separate, rather they are very relative to each other. We can not do good to others, except through the medium of evil. Animals are living upon plants, men upon animals, the strong upon the weak.³⁰ This is going on every where. We say that in the long run, everything will be good. But we cannot get any answer that why should good come out of evil, but not be done through good alone ? There is no solution of this problem. The fire that burns a child , may cook a good meal for starving man. These are all māyā . Māyā denies any categorical statement with regard to the perplexity of the world.

This notion of māyā as explained by Vivekananda may be interpreted in the following way for our better understanding.

It is a remarkable fact that Vivekananda has described māyā as a statement of facts as they exist. To him, the very basis of our being is contradiction. Let us ponder over this concept. It seems to us that the nature of an object or an aspect of something which seems to me as real is not the total picture of that parti-

30. Tagore also depicts such heierarchy of worldly existence in one of his dramas named ' Visarjana '. In the speech of Raghupati, the dark, perhaps the darkest side of the worldly existence is described to Jayasingha. Raghupati describes the world as ' mahāhatyāśālā ', this world is a place of cruel slaughterers. - Rabīndraracanāvalī , Vol. I , (Visva Bharati , 1393 B.S.), p.560.

cular object. What seems to us good in one aspect may be evil in another aspect and the vice-versa. In this way each and every object, or each and every incident can be interpreted. Even behind the smiling face of an individual there might be the shadow of sorrow or weeping. The object which is seen is to be taken as partially real, but not totally. In this way, any statement of fact is not complete, but incomplete. To Vivekananda, the characteristic features of an object are not to be taken as final. There might be an opposite picture on the other side. Hence, no position or no character is final. This in fact, is inherent character of an object. This concept of māyā is in conformity with the etymological meaning of the term which comes from the root ' mā ' (meaning to measure) . That which limits something is māyā , which indicates the veiling character of it. The object as it seems to us gives a partial picture of the object , and hence it hides other picture of the same. That is why, each and every statement of fact is māyā. As this interpretation of māyā is represented to the persons who are believers of materialism trained in Western culture , it is described as relativity but not as illusion. Afterwards he has shown that as māyā has got a positive character represented in different phenomenal objects created by the Divine, it is to be taken as power of the Divine.

In the attitude of Vivekananda this paradox of our lives is māyā. It is nothing but the statement of facts. The whole world, our total experiences are going through this tremendous contradiction . It denotes that wherever there is good, there must also be

evil, wherever there is evil, there must be some good, wherever there is life, death must follow as its shadow. It is impossible to deny this fact. His very intention is to say that these all are māyā only, the real fact of our life that we can not avoid anyhow, we are born in this māyā , live in it, think in it, we dream in it.

Māyā is an indeterminate form between the absolute Being and non-being. It is Relative.³¹ Of course the theory of relativity had not seen the light during Vivekananda's day. He only uses it incidentally. Māyā is not existence since it is the sport or lilā (self-elevation) of Brahman and as we can not deny its existence, hence it is not non-existence. Māyā is a positive fact of experience. It can not be absolutely non-existent; a creative force can not be absolutely zero - from the ultimate view point. To put it otherwise, it may be said that our language that functions through categorical concepts of existence and non-existence are incapable of defining māyā . The place of māyā for Vivekananda is somewhere in between categorical existence and non-existence. So he sometimes calls it indescribable.

Vivekananda admits that māyā has a reality from the lower point of view only. But he never uses the word ' illusion ' as the english synonym for the word ' māyā '. In his opinion it is erroneously explained as illusion. When the universe is said to be māyā , it also has to be explained as being illusion. The attempt to translate the word in such a way is neither happy nor correct.³² This

31. Romain Rolland prefers to put it as this term " Relativity " - The life of Vivekananda as the universal Gospel - (Op. cit.) p. 181-182.

32. C.W.V. , Vo. II, (Op. Cit.) p. 105.

universe is not unreal. His master Sri Ramakrishna did not treat the world as illusion. Ramakrishna realised that if the self exists then the non-self must also be existed . Vivekananda has learned from his guru to take the universe as a play of Brahman. The other name of this play is māyā . The universe has its significance - " in freedom it rises, in freedom it rests, and into freedom it melts away ".³³ Nothing in the universe is to be rejected. The beautiful play of hide and seek of sorrows and joys are quite natural, without them the life will be ugly indeed. For him the worldly matters are so important that he can tell easily " Bread ! Bread ! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here giving me eternal bliss in heaven " !³⁴ He realises that material civilisation is necessary to create work for the poor people. It is not an obstacle to spiritual realization.

However, Vivekananda remains silent why is there this māyā at all ? He has ruled out any ' how ' or 'why' regarding ' māyā '. He wants to emphasise the fact that the entire phenomenal world is under the power of māyā .His heartiest interest was to ' delude the countrymen with spiritual strength and ideals '. He believes that if māyā is illusion, then it is illusory in this sense that the veil of māyā covered our very self . As a result ~~to~~ our real nature is unknown to us and we are misled ~~and~~ we make distinctions of ' I ' and ' You ' ; we have to shun the veil of māyā to

33. C.W.V. Vol. II (Op. Cit.) p-125.

34. The letters of Swami Vivekananda (Mayavati Advaita Ashram, 1977 , 4th Impression) p. 141.

realise the inner-most being who is the ' fountain head ' of all existence, when we are under the māyā . We see the phenomenon and do not see God. When we see God, this universe vanishes. In the case of illusion, when we perceive a rope in the place of a snake there are not two things – a rope separate and a snake separate. We never see the real and the false at the same time. When we perceive the rope we do not perceive the snake at a time, again when we perceive the snake we do not see the rope at all. We are all born monists. We always perceive the one. A true Advaitin realises that there is but one Ātman , there can not be two. The one existence when is seen through the senses is called the world, the world of thoughts and ideas and when it is seen in its true essence it appears as the one infinite Being. As soon as we realise that behind everything the same divinity exists; we feel that in injuring another we are injuring ourselves, in loving another we are loving ourselves. The sense of duality brings hatred and jealousy, misery, struggle and other so called evils. From the realisation of oneness springs that principle of Advaita morality which Vivekananda called ' self-abnegation ' ³⁵. He regards that when a man has become ready to give up his life for the lowest beings, he has reached at that perfection which the Advaita wants to attain. The whole phenomenal world will be disappeared for him. It will

By ' self-abnegation ' Vivekananda means the realisation of the true essence of a man through the cancellation of his individualised self, his little personalised self which makes him different from others and this is the cause of all his miseries.

35. C.W.V. , Vol. I , (Op. Cit.) p. 364.

be disappeared in the sense that he will not see the world as a world of misery or pain but as full of existence, consciousness and bliss. And this state is called in vedānta the state of Jīvanmukti , the living freedom. In this state the ignorance is vanished yet the body remains, Therefore, a Jīvanmukta can do work, but he will not be deluded. 'Mukti' in Vivekananda's thought means freedom from one's own narrow outlook by way of having a broader one within the phenomenal world. For this he can become self-less, fearless and sensitive to others. This is the goal of the vedānta , consciously or unconsciously the whole universe is going towards that goal.

To sum up , it may be said that Vivekananda maintains a sharp difference in interpreting māyā from the traditional Advaitic understanding without contradicting the basic theme of it. This is to be considered as a great plus point to the Practical Vedānta of Swamiji. Māyā in traditional Vedānta is considered as the power of Saguna Brahman (God) " through which the world-illusion is created. Vivekananda would add that the power in itself is neither good nor bad, it is neutral. . . . Māyā's neutral nature can be retained only if māyā is conceived as the name for the fact of contradiction apparent in the world ".³⁶

36. B.K. Lal : Contemporary Indian Philosophy (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass , 1992) p. 18.

CHAPTER - 4

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SARVEPALLI

RADHAKRISHNAN'S PHILOSOPHY :

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN'S PHILOSOPHY

(5th September, 1888 — 17th April 1975)

I. Some Preliminary Observations about S. Radhakrishnan's Philosophy :

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888 - 1975), a philosopher-Statesman of India, is basically an academic philosopher with rare power of interpreting and intermingling Eastern and Western Culture. This capability of making synthesis of the eastern tradition and western thought, enables him to give the understanding of world culture in general and Indian culture in particular ' a broader basis, a wider scope and deeper content. His philosophy is an attempt to interpret the traditional philosophy of the East to compose the current distraction of the western tradition and to bring the force and energy of western philosophy to vitalise ' the apathy ' of its eastern counterpart. And in this approach, Radhakrishnan left no stone unturned to restate the ancient ideals of life in accordance with the needs of the modern scientific age. In other words , the traditional philosophical wisdom of our heritage has been brought out by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan from the dark abyss of obstructions, where it was lying all the time, into the open to be viewed in the light of the present philosophical beliefs and understandings. Perhaps for this reason, Joad describes Radhakrishnan as a ' li-aïson officer between East and West¹ ', who in his Indian philosophy Vol II, suggests that now-a-days our philosophical enterprise must " build a great edifice in harmony with ancient endeavour as well as the modern

1. Joad : Counter attack from the East (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1933) p. 38

outlook ".² His writings on varied subjects are vivid examples of his synthetic way of thinking. Radhakrishnan never believes that the world which is a perpetual procession of events is merely an illusion (as it is understood by Śāṅkara). Evidently in his tireless and sometimes tiresome efforts, he refutes such interpretations of māyā where it negates the reality of the phenomenal world and affects the urgency of the ethical demand. Radhakrishnan considers the importance of the problem of māyā from axiological and soteriological status of the world. He emphasises on the need for both thought and action, both theory and practice in our life. Naturally unless the world is considered as real, our ethical actions become-meaningless. The task of philosophy, for Radhakrishnan, is not mere logical analysis, not only to interpret the problems of life but to illuminate and guide our very existence. That is why, he describes human perfection as a sort of wedding between ' high thought ' and ' just action '. Again, he suggests that " we need constructive philosophy, an articulation of ultimate presupposition about the world we live in."³ and the concept of māyā is one such ultimate presuppositions about the phenomena of nature. It does not matter whether such presuppositions or root principles of experience be proved or disproved by our discursive intellect. In fact, it is neither verified nor falsified. Since he understands philosophy in its multidimensional aspects, he is not to deduce conclusions from a set of

2. Indian Philosophy Vol. II (Ibid, 1929) p. 768.

3. Occasional Speeches and Writings :: Oct. 1952 - Feb. 1959.
 (Delhi Pub. Div. Ministry of information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India , 1960) p. 399.

dogmas, but the explication of the presuppository of experience.⁴ Thus we see that Radhakrishnan's view of māyā is an outcome of his motive to inspire positive ethical action in the universe.

However, it is indeed true that it is not an easy job to characterise Radhakrishnan's philosophy in any of the existing model, such as, idealism, realism, pragmatism etc. without further adjectives. His is a wonderful philosophical synthesis of nondualistic vedānta and the philosophy of Absolute Idealism of Hegel. His vedānta is the vedānta of integral experience. He reconciles the monistic character of the Vedāntic Reality with Absolute Idealism's dictum that everything is a necessary aspect of the One. As a result of this unique synthesis, it is not possible to describe his thought by any of the current metaphysical models. His is a philosophy of 'Monistic Idealism'. By 'idealism' he means not 'idea-ism' but 'ideal-ism'. It is a theory which emphasises the ultimacy and value of some ideal. For Radhakrishnan, the universe is driving at something, driving not irrational in movement, but is a constant progress to some higher meaning and experience. "An idealist" to quote his own words, "can find no rest until he gains a view or a vision of the world of things and persons which will enable him to interpret the manifold experiences as expressive in some sort, of a purpose"⁵. He considers that the prime task for a philosopher is to find an explanation of the universe. Like the traditional

4. Reign of Religion in contemporary philosophy, (London, Mcmillan, 1920) p. 402.

5. An idealistic view of Life (Op. Cit., 1932) pp. 15 - 16.

142

Vedāntins, Radhakrishnan conceives Ultimate Reality as spiritual— sometimes he calls it ' Brahman ', and in sometimes the ' Absolute '. It is called absolute, because it is " pure consciousness and pure freedom and infinite possibility " ⁶. In addition to Brahman or Absolute, in different writings, Radhakrishnan admits the principle of God. But like Śāṅkara, he does not make any distinction between empirical (vyavahārika) and transcendental (pāramārthika) stand- points as the basis of the distinction between God (saguna Brahman) and the Absolute (Nirguna Brahman) for an explanation of the world of multiplicity without contradicting the monistic conception of reality. Radhakrishnan feels it necessary to admit a principle that would account for the order and purpose of the universe '. If Primary Being is not conceived as creative, one can not account for the dynamic creative nature of the world of our experience. Thus for Radhakrishnan infinite possibility - the Absolute " we call the Supreme, the Absolute when we view it apart from the cosmos, God in relation to the cosmos. The absolute is the pre-cosmic nature of God, and God is the Absolute from the cosmic point of view " ⁷ Radhakrishnan speaks of the role of intellect and intuition as the positive ways from the lower to the higher gradation of approach to the ideal Reality. ⁸ Notwithstanding the fact that on the part of finite,

6. An Idealistic view of Life (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1932)

p. 243.

7. Ibid p. 273.

8. Though it is not possible and not even necessary to discuss Radhakrishnan's conception of reality in details, it may be said in this connection that he conceives reality in four different dimensions - (a) Brahman (the Absolute); (b) Īśvara (the personal deity); (c) Hiranyagarbha (the world-spirit); and (d) Virāt (the world). He gives equal poise or weight to each of the four aspects of reality.

be necessary and not accidental on the part of the Absolute. In reply to this, Radhakrishnan would reply that such a watertight compartment between 'necessity' and 'accident' is not well-grounded in case of reality. Thus he says that "it is in the nature of the Absolute to grow into the world - the world is the affirmation of the Absolute".¹² He explains the derivative meaning of the word 'Brahman' which comes from the root 'Brh'-means 'to grow'. If this is contended, then "we do not have the infinite and the finite, God and the world, but only the infinite as and in the finite, God as and in the world The question as to why the Absolute limited itself is irrelevant. For, there is no such thing as the Infinite which first was an Infinite and then transformed itself in the finite".¹³ It is precisely here Śaṅkara explains the multiplicity of the world and the monistic conception of reality by a recourse to māyā as mysterious or anirvacanīya. But Radhakrishnan here instead of giving a negative explanation of the world that is ultimately illusory, gives a positive explanation although he admits that human minds which function through concepts and categories can at best know fragmentary elements of the universe.

12. Radhakrishnan : The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy (London, Macwilliam, 1920) p. 443.

13. Ibid pp. 442 - 443.

For Śaṅkara, Brahman, devoid of any attributes is ultimately real, the world apart from Brahman is unreal . The universe of multiplicity, according to Śaṅkara , appears to be real as long as the knowledge of non-dual Brahman is not realised. The world is nothing but an appearance or vivarta of Brahman, the ultimate Reality. But Radhakrishnan clearly differs from such an explanation of the world with illusory status. Thus in his Indian Philosophy Vol. 2 , he very boldly states his position as neither Śaṅkarite nor Rāmānujists but a reasonable and convincing view which is non-traditional in character.¹⁴ He states further :

" This world is not an illusion; it is not nothingness, for it is willed by God and therefore real. Its reality is radically different from the being of the Absolute-God. The Absolute alone has not created divine reality, all else is dependent, created reality. This is the significance of the doctrine of māyā ".¹⁵ Evidently Radhakrishnan's interpretation of māyā has two broad aspects. In its negative aspect, it denies the view that the world is an illusion and in the positive aspect, it exposes, six other characteristics of the concept of māyā. P. T. Raju remarks that Radhakrishnan's interpretation (the positive approach) is not incoherent with the traditional advaitic interpretation. The universe is a combination of being and nonbeing ' the fullness of being is called the Absolute and all worldly

14. Indian Philosophy Vol. 2, Further Considerations of some problems. (Op. Cit. 1927) p. 674.

15. Schilpp : Paul Arthur : ed. The Philosophy of Sarvepally Radhakrishnan (The Library of Living Philosophers, New York, 1952) p.41.

objects which have positive value in this universe must be preserved in the Absolute. And so the significance of understanding Māyā as both being and non-being is that it is possible to carry māyā into the heart of the Absolute ".¹⁶

II. Does māyā mean illusion ?

In the beginning of twentieth century, the concept of māyā in the sense of illusion regains new momentum in the hands of Prabhu Dutta Shāstri⁻¹⁷ and Radhakrishnan¹⁸ in his article ' The Vedānta Philosophy and the Doctrine of Māyā ' has made many references to Shastri's interpretation. The denial of the association of the world negation and illusionism with māyā is again and again strongly recorded in several writings of Radhakrishnan. For him even Advaita Vedānta does not bring you down to the dismissal of the world as a mere " illusion " or " phantasmagoria ".¹⁹ In his Indian Philosophy Vol. 2, he argues that there are certain cogent grounds which evidently show the reality of the phenomenal as against the illusory character of the universe.²⁰ So it is not unthinkable that Radhakrishnan would critically examine any interpretation of the concept

16. P.T. Raju : Idealistic thought of India

(Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953) p. 186.

17. P.D. Shastri: The Doctrine of māyā in the Philosophy of the Vedānta (London, Luzac & Co., 1911) p. 09.

18. See, International Journal of Ethics , 24 (July 1914)pp.431-451.

19. Radhakrishnan : Our Heritage (Delhi, Hind Pocket Books, 1973) pp. 33 - 38.

20. Indian Philosophy Vo. 2 (Op. cit.) p. 581

of māyā from top to bottom . P.D. Shastri is of the opinion that although the word māyā was not used by Philosophers of very old age, yet the concept had been used in those days and it is Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad where we acquainted first with the word māyā in the sense of illusion.²¹ Shastri analyses the Vedic-upaniṣadic philosophy, and opines that the word māyā in the pre-śaṅkarite philosophy used to mean ' illusion ' and in the śaṅkarite usage the meaning of terms has not been changed. To put it in Shastri's own words.

" We have seen that the word ' māyā ' meant in R.V. -

- (1) supernatural power, mysterious will-power, wonderful skill, and the idea of the underlying mystery being more emphasised later on, it came to mean in A.V.
- (2) magic, illusion, And, further, we said that in the Brahman as and the Upaniṣads also it meant.
- (3) illusion, and that this meaning was more and more fixed subsequently, till in the time of Śaṅkara , it was established beyond doubt. The sense of ' illusion ' may easily be found to exist in form even in the Vedic usage of the term, e.g., where in the R.V. it meant (Power or skill ' it always meant ' supernatural ' or ' wonderous ' power and not the ordinary physical power "²²

21. My conclusions are (1) That the conception of Māyā is as old as some of the later books of the Rgveda (2) that the word ' Māyā ' in the sense of ' illusion ' of course, Occurs later-for the first time in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad - Preface: The Doctrine of Māyā in the Philosophy of the Vedānta of P.D. Shastri (London, Luzac & Co. 1911) p. IX.

22. Ibid p. 31.

Radhakrishnan's interpretation on the contrary, shows just reverse of Shastri's position that illusion as the connotation of māyā to a large extent fixed up to the time of Śaṅkara. But the grounds for an illusional interpretation of māyā, according to Radhakrishnan are faulty enough.²³ Shastri's main thesis may be classified into two heads - that (1) the world we see around us and in which we live in as only an appearance (māyā), an illusory appearance of the reality; and (2) the Ātman or self is the only Reality in Vedānta Philosophy. This Ātman is verily described by Paramātman, Brahman etc. Shastri's logic is very simple. He says that acceptance of Ātman as the only reality that is the reality in the exclusive sense of the term, excludes the possibility for the world to be real. He considers that Advaita Vedānta can not logically recognise the reality of the world in order to maintain the monistic interpretation that Ātman or Brahman is the only Reality, that is why Shastri argues that Śaṅkara introduces the concept of Vivarta (Reflection) and explains the riddle of ^{the} world-multiplicity by the word māyā.

Radhakrishnan objects to such an interpretation by saying that the conception of Ātman or Brahman as the only reality can not exclude the reality of the world. Reality for Radhakrishnan is not an exclusive concept, but all inclusive one. Radhakrishnan does not deny

23. One may see Radhakrishnan's article entitled " The Doctrine of Māyā : Some Problems " in the proceedings of the sixth International Congress of Philosophy pp. 683-689, ed. by E.S.

Brightman, New York, Longmans, 1927 and " The Vedānta Philosophy and the Doctrine of Māyā " International Journal of Ethics Vol. 24, 1914 pp. 431-451.

that Brahman or Ātman is ^{the} only reality. The all inclusive conception of the Absolute Reality in Radhakrishnan's Philosophy permits him to say that the world is the manifestations of one of the infinite possibilities of the Absolute by his own will. In his interpretation thus Radhakrishnan neither denies the ultimate reality of Brahman as it is admitted by the traditional vedāntins nor even the reality of the world unlike them. This is evident from Radhakrishnan's view with regard to the status of the world where he states that it is a combination of Being and non-being, sad and asad. The world is not in the nature of being (bhāva) only, and it is not in the nature of non-being (abhāva) only either. To see the world as it is to see it a synthesis of both being and becoming. All things in the world participates in the character of this duality. This complex universe is a progressive manifestation of the supreme Ātman from 'matter to the spiritual freedom, from anna to ānanda'. He does believe that there is an intimate connection between God and the world of souls. The world in his view is not void or unreal. Our progress from unreal to the Real, is an impossibility. According to Radhakrishnan the upaniṣads make it clear that the basic reality is the many. For him, Brahman is the mind of mind the life of life, the upaniṣads do not assert the unreality of mind and life.

In the Introduction of the 'Principal Upaniṣads' Radhakrishnan describes māyā as the power of Īśvara, and he denotes that the individual soul is bound down by the māyā of Īśvara; the world has the tendency to delude us into thinking that it is self-dependent and we are subject to māyā or delusion. As a result of this delusion

we think that we are completely separate entities. So, according to him, " māyā is concerned not with the existence of the world but with its meaning, not with the faculty of the world but with the way in which we look upon ".²⁴ If the traditional view of māyā is intended to mean ' illusory ' nature of the world then Radhakrishnan would very frankly differ from that. Perhaps such temptation has led him to add an appendix to the second edition of his Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, as a response to the criticism which arises from some misunderstandings of his views. To clarify his own position, Radhakrishnan remarks :

"Many of my critics were puzzled by my discussion of the Upaniṣads, since I did not fly a banner and fix a label to my view. My criticism of the theory of, ' illusion ' generally associated with ' Śaṅkara's metaphysics and supported by Deussen, led some of my critics to imagine that I was opposed to Śaṅkara's view. My indifference to personal theism made it equally clear to some others that I was not friendly to Rāmānuja's interpretation . But if one is not a follower of Śaṅkara or of Rāmānuja or any other classical interpreter it is assumed that one can only be a revealer in strange unphilosophical confusion. I submit that my interpretation of the Upaniṣads is not an unreasonable one, though it may seem to differ from this or that tradition in this or that point "²⁵ This shows that his denial of the theory of illusion in the first edition of Indian Philosophy Vol. I, remains unaltered in the second edition, because such a denial is

24. Radhakrishnan : The Principal Upaniṣads (Oxford University press , Delhi 1989) p. 87.

25. Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy , Vol. I (Op. Cit.) p. 674.

logically well-grounded although it may be a variation from traditional adherence to any of the systems. He contends further that as a free, rational thinker and independent interpreter, he can not stand silently without giving his judgments on the conflict of views. The world for Radhakrishnan, is a process of becoming; it is not unreal or illusion. He has approached to the doctrine of māyā to save the world and to give it a real being. To him the world is a wonderful creation, creation of the Absolute, the lilā of the Supreme Being. He believes that the purpose of the cosmic evolution is to reveal the spirit underlying it. The attributes of Supreme Being - Knowledge, beauty and love is revealed in each of finite beings. So the world which is full of values is not an illusion or unreal. In his view thus " it is wrong to interpret the meaning of the doctrine of māyā in a way that affects the urgency of the ethical demand ".²⁶

III. What does māyā mean ?

So far we have seen that Radhakrishnan can not accept the word māyā in the sense of illusion or world negation. This only constitutes the negative aspect of his view that ' what māyā is not '. But a faithful exposition of his view demands an account of the positive aspect of what māyā stands for. But it is not an easy job to say, what Radhakrishnan means by ' māyā ' in a line or two.

26. Radhakrishnan : My search for Truth Published in Religion in Transition. ed. by V.T.A. Ferm (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1937) p. 22.

Because the discussion of māyā arises many times in his many philosophical writings in different senses.²⁷ He himself has even summarised his views on māyā on different occasions of writings where he assigns six different meanings to it. But in his opinion these six "different significations (of māyā) are not irreconcilable, though confusion will result if we do not carefully distinguish them".²⁸ These six non-illusory meanings of māyā are : (1) Inexplicable mystery, (2) a creative force, (3) a primal matter, (4) a duality of cit and acid consciousness and matter or non-consciousness, (5) a concealing factor and (6) an one-sided necessity or dependence.

(1) Māyā as an epistemological concept :

An Inexplicable Mystery explained :

Radhakrishnan is quite sceptical about the ability of human understanding , which functioning through concepts and categories, to grasp the entirety of what is real. For him the epistemological or

-
27. Radhakrishnan summarises the meanings of māyā in (1) Indian Philosophy Vol. I [Appendix I] pp. 546-547. (2) Indian Philosophy Vol. 2, (appendix II) pp. 573-574. (3) The Bhagavadgītā (appendix III) pp. 42-43. (4) History of Philosophy : Eastern and Western Vol. I , (appendix IV) p. 249 and (5) The Philosophy of Sarvapall Radhakrishnan ed. by Schilpp. pp.800-802. The Publication of these vols have been showing in the Bibliography. At any rate, it may further be noted that Radhakrishnan does not assign the same six meaning to each summary.
28. Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy Vol. I (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1923) p. 513.

derivative meaning of the word māyā means that " which measures out, moulds forms in the formless ".²⁹ Regarding the relation between the appearance and reality, Radhakrishnan points out that such a relation can never be understood and every attempt to explain this mystery is bound to fail, since the world of plurality and the ultimate reality - these two are heterogenous.³⁰ But to say that māyā is a mystery is not to say that it is a mirage or illusion. On the contrary, Radhakrishnan in various contexts of philosophical enterprise exposes the inexplicable character of māyā when he is asked about the exact logical relation between the Absolute and the world of multiplicity. He intends to indicate the same inexplicability when he discusses the advaita vedānta conception of māyā by the epistemological term ' incomprehensibility '.

In advaita vedānta, according to Radhakrishnan the sanskrit word ' anirvacaniya ' means something cannot be spoken. But this does not amount to the refutation of the reality of the world with its

29. Radhakrishnan ^{The} Principal Upaniṣads (Op. Cit.) p. 83.

30. Radhakrishnan does neither to deny the reality of the universe nor the monistic conception of reality as Absolute. There is for inexplicable mystery regarding the exact relation between Absolute Reality and the world. It is called māyā since it is an inexplicable mystery. This does not mean that the world is mirage or illusion. In his own words, " It is one thing to say that the secret of existence, how the unchangeable reality expresses itself in the changing universe without forfeiting its nature is a mystery, and another to dismiss the whole changing universe as a mere mirage ".

- Indian Philosophy Vol. 2, (Op. Cit.) p. 463.

multiple character. The reality of the world can not be denied inspite of the fact that we can not describe how does it exist.³¹ By the word māyā the inexplicable relation between Paramātmān and Jīvātman is also indicated. By the word māyā Radhakrishnan means any kind of relation that baffles all attempts to explain it. For him, " the word māyā registers our finiteness and points to a gap in our knowledge ".³² It is indeed true that by our finite ways of knowing that function through concepts and categories though we are able to know " howness " of facts, we can not explain the " whyness " of some of the very persistent questions. In otherwords, the capability of our knowing is very limited and thus not sufficiently warranted to grasp the relation between the Absolute reality and the world of Plurality. This is māyā , the inexplicable mystery. Since the answers of the ultimate ' cosmogonic questions ' are always beyond our reach, we can not but maintain the stand of wise-agnosticism. This wise-agnostic attitude is not initial in Radhakrishnan's Philosophy, rather after serious rational investigation

31. " When the Absolute is taken as pure being, its relation to the world is inexplicable, anirvacanīya . We know that without the back-ground of being there can be no world. The relation between the two cannot be logically explicated. This inexplicability of the logical relationship does not repudite the existence of the world. It does not say that the world is not, though appears to be " -

- Reply to Critics in The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan;
Appendix V , ed. P.A. Schilpp p. 800

32. Indian Philosophy Vol. 2 , (Op. Cit.) p. 569.

he arrives at this position. Here Radhakrishnan's view is not a radical departure from Gaudapāda and Śaṅkara . Both Gaudapāda and Śaṅkara refers māyā as inexplicable mystery with regard to the relation between Ātman and the world.³³

(2) Māyā as a cosmogonic concept explained :

Radhakrishnan in the two volumes of Indian Philosophy and in Bhagavadgītā has used term māyā to denote the fact of self-expanding or self-manifesting aspect of the Absolute. It is the power of self-becoming. By self-becoming Radhakrishnan means what is meant by the Sanskrit word 'Ātmavibhūti'. The word 'Vibhūti' means 'to be arisen', to be developed or manifested. Now 'ātmavibhūti' thus stands for self-manifesting or appearing of the self. Self-absolute (Paramātmān), according to Radhakrishnan is " that one " (Tadekaṁ). Philosophically speaking māyā here refers to the ' power of that One ' to become the many. The absolute self is also called Brahman which has been derived from the root 'brh' meaning to 'burst forth ' or to ' grow '. And for Radhakrishnan the world of

33. " The word māyā is not used by Gaudapāda with any strictness. It is used to indicate (1) the inexplicability of the relation between the Ātman and the world (2) the nature or power of Īśvara ; (3) the apparent dreamlike character of the world. The first is brought into greater prominence by Śaṅkara , who is indifferent to the third, which makes Gaudapāda's position more akin to the samvrtisatya or untruth of the Mādhymikas rather than to the vyavahārikasatya or practical truth ". -

multiple modality is the outcome of the growth or the bursting forth of what is Absolute Reality. Thus māyā as a cosmogonic concept means the creative force inherent in God (Īśvara). But Radhakrishnan's view of creative force is fundamentally different from Biblical theory of creation. According to Bible, creation presupposes an independent deity which causes the universe to come into existence. Radhakrishnan on the contrary, does never admit the concept of an independent deity which creates ' something separate '. The absolute self which is otherwise known as Brahman or Ātman does require māyā the creative force in order to produce the universe of multiplicity. It is to be noted here that the Absolute Reality which has infinite possibilities must have the power to limit itself to form the multi-dimensional modality of the universe. For Radhakrishnan " If the power of manifestation were excluded from the nature of the Absolute, it would not be the Absolute".³⁴ Although māyā is described as a creative force of God, Radhakrishnan prefers to call his theory ' emanation ' and not ' creation '. In his Eastern Religions and Western Thought, he says that the theory of emanation is different from creation.³⁵ According to the former, the many comes into being from the one without really separating themselves from the one, whereas latter stands for a real separation of the creator from the created, Īśvara and Virāt. As a matter of fact, the creator and the created are poises of one reality. In other words, Īśvara,

34. Religion in a changing world , (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1967) pp. 87-88.

35. Eastern Religions and Western Thought , (Oxford; clarendon Press, 1939) p. 210.

for Radhakrishnan, ' brings about the world by becoming it, not by creating it '. In support of our interpretation , we may cite the following passage from Radhakrishnan's writing :

" God has the power to become anything at any time through what is known as his māyāśakti. He is the creator of everything and is the material and efficient cause of the world. God does not create by using Prakṛti but through his own nature ".³⁶ Māyā as a creative force by no means supports the contention that the world is an illusion. For him, the interpretation of the world as illusory, can not be traced to the Upaniṣadic teaching. He clearly denies the contention that the power of creation is something illusory.³⁷ Radhakrishnan would very aptly urge that if the world is an illusion, then the Upaniṣadic seers and saviours do not speak of the creation of the world. In the Śvetāśvatara, the Supreme is described as great māyin and the world is said to be his wonderful creation. In his Reply to Critics Radhakrishnan takes pains to underline his understanding of Māyāvāda which differs from illusionism. He writes : " The tendency

36. Indian Philosophy Vol. 2, (Op. Cit. 1927) p. 549.

37. There are several passages in Radhakrishnan's writings where he very clearly and distinctly denies that the world is māyā in the sense of illusion. In an article entitled " The Vedānta Philosophy and the Doctrine of Māyā , Radhakrishnan writes". The accounts of creation in the Upaniṣads are not to be taken seriously; but they clearly show the upaniṣad writers did not conceive the world as pure illusion. They regarded the world as real and seriously set about accounting for its reality.

- International Journal of Ethics Vol. 24 , 1914 , p. 437.

to regard Īśvara or God as Phenomenal and Brahman or the Absolute as real is not correct When the Supreme is viewed not merely as Absolute Being but as Eternal Creativity, the creative power is called māyā . In my account I distinguished Divine Being and Divine action, Absolute in itself, in repose, and the Absolute as active or energizing, Brahman and Īśvara . The latter is said to be possessed of māyā or power of manifestation at delights in manifesting ".³⁸

(3) Māyā as an ' uniting ' concept explained :

It is well known that Radhakrishnan had deep respect for Kapila's Sāṃkhya philosophy and he was knowingly or unknowingly immensely influenced by the consciousness (Puruṣa) and matter (Prakṛti) duality of the Sāṃkhya in forming his own non-dualistic philosophy. The duality of consciousness and matter, of being and non-being is inherent in all worldly existence. In his own words, " If we turn to the world process which is a perpetual becoming, it is a mixture of being and non-being, sat and asat, the divine principle, and Prakṛti. Hiranyagarbha and his world are both subject to time, and

Again, the almost same theme has been described in his " Introduction " to his translation of the Bhagavadgītā . He says : " The creative power by which God fashions the universe is called Yogamāyā . There is no suggestion that the forms , the events and the objects produced by māyā or the form - building power of God, the māyin , are only illusory ". (Under Allen & Unwin, 1948) - The Bhagavadgītā p. 41.

38. Philosophy of S. Radhakrishnan : ed. Schilpp. (Motilal Banarsidas 1992) p. 801.

should be distinguished from the eternal. But the temporal becoming in by no means false".³⁹ Now it is evident that this dual character of worldly objects is signified by the word ' māyā '. The very nature of the world is sat-asad-ātmaka.⁴⁰

(4) Māyā as Primal Matter explained :

The metaphysical profundity of the Sāṃkhya dualism has always been a source of philosophical inspiration to Radhakrishnan. But the difficulty with the Sāṃkhya system, for him is to ' unite ' the dual Principles of consciousness (Puruṣa) and matter (Prakṛti). Perhaps, for this reason, he introduces the concept of Absolute (Brahman) of Advaita Vedānta and makes a synthesis of the Sāṃkhya dualism and the Vedāntic non-dualism. The Sāṃkhya cosmogony has been vivid when Radhakrishnan says that the need of consciousness enters the womb of matter in order to generate the world of multiplicity.⁴¹

39. S. Radhakrishnan : The Principal Upaniṣads , (Op. Cit.) p. 90.

40. Even in ' Reply to Critics ' once again he mentions the duality of the nature of worldly objects by the word ' māyā '. He contents : " All things in the world participate in the characters of this duality. They are sat-asad-ātmaka. They are real as well as unreal. This dual character is sometimes indicated by the word ' māyā '. The world and the World Spirit are both equally real " - Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan : ed. Sehilpp. (Op. Cit.) p. 801.

41. In his Introduction to Bhagavadgītā , Radhakrishnan states " Gradually, māyā comes to mean the lower Prakṛti since puruṣa is said to be the seed which the Lord casts into the Womb of Prakṛti for the generation of the Universe " - The Bhagavadgītā : (New York, Harper and Row 1973) p. 42.

Māyā is called Primal matter and is sometimes described as identical with what is called ' lower Prakṛti '. But Radhakrishnan's adherence to Sāṃkhya view does not construe the sense that he shares the pluralistic Sāṃkhya view that ' Puruṣa and Prakṛti are independent '. Radhakrishnan agrees with the Sāṃkhya philosophers holding the view that everything in this universe arises from this primal matter - māyā or Prakṛti and that this primal matter is not an illusion or mirage. He only denies the independence of Prakṛti . He says thus : " The world is traced to the development of Prakṛti which is also called māyā in the Advaita Vedānta, but this Prakṛti or māyā is not independent of spirit. It is dependent on Brahman. Brahman with Prakṛti or māyā is saguna Brahman or Īśvara comprehending the diversity of souls and objects ".⁴²

(5) Māyā as a Soteriological and Axiological concept explained :

Radhakrishnan's soteriological conviction that there is 'something more ', behind the phenomenal world tempts him to emphasis on māyā

42. History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western , Vol. 1, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1952) p. 276. It may further be noted that the synthetic spirit of Radhakrishnan enables him also to unite Vedānta, Sāṃkhya , Vaiṣṇava and Sāiva contentions in his emanation theory of the world. Thus we come across the following passage in the Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy :

" The Absolute breaks up its wholeness and develops the reality of self and not-self. The self is God, and the not-self the matter of the universe. All Hindu systems of Philosophy posit these two ultimate principles. In the Sāṃkhya it is Puruṣa

as a source of concealment. It is on account of māyā that we cannot see the unity and harmony behind the apparent multiplicity and non-integrity. Our logical enquiry fails to grasp the nature of 'thing in-itself', since the manifested world which is a product of māyā hides the real, from our vision. For this reason, Radhakrishnan sometimes calls māyā or the manifested world as 'delusive' in character. But this does ^{not} mean that the world is an illusion despite we view it as a mere mechanical determination of the nature unrelated to God, that is to say, we fail to cognise its Divine essence. Māyā is not illusion, but difference of attitudes. To put it in other words, the concealing nature of māyā is inherent in the attitude of very cognising act, and it is not at all in that which is cognised. Māyā is delusion. ⁴³ It is the source of a persistent and

and Prakṛti, in the Vedānta it is Īśvara and Māyā, in Vaiṣṇavism it is Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā and in Śaivism it is Śiva and Śakti. Māyā, Rādhā and Śakti are respectively the intellectual the emotional and volitional aspects of Prakṛti. Kṛṣṇa, Śiva and Īśvara are one in essence and so are Rādhā, Śakti and Māyā "- (London, Mc Millan, 1920) p. 444.

43. It is interesting here to elucidate the difference of the concepts illusion, delusion and hallucination. These words are basically western in their originations. D.A. Braue very carefully distinguishes each of the concepts from another in his ' Māyā in Radhakrishnan's Thought ' in the following lines :

" First of all, an illusion is a distorted or abnormal perception. It is important to notice that the meaning of the term ' illusion ' extends over the entire range of perceptual psychology - Physiological psychology as well as abnormal-psychology. Discussion of " distorted " perceptions belongs

false belief about one's self. It is māyā , the delusion, on account of which we have the tendency to identify ourselves without apparent selves. But as a matter of fact, for Radhakrishnan, the normal cognition or the cognition of reality is the cognition of whole - the manifested universe as well as ' something more ' behind it. Māyā conceals or hides the real nature of things as they are. But Radhakrishnan here cautions by saying that " māyā as concealment has no power over the liberated soul. " ⁴⁴ Not only concealment of real but also projection of unreal is also the function of māyā . It conceals the real nature of things that is, they are integrally connected inspite of their apparent differences and through its projecting power, it creates the cognition of multiplicity as real in place of one reality. When we are under the influence of māyā, as think we are completely separate entities, sharing little and mistaking individuality, which is one of the conditions of our life in space-time, for isolation and not wishing to lose the here outlines of

in the realm of physiological psychology. An optical illusion is an example of a distorted perception. Secondly a delusion is a persistent and false belief about one's self. Delusion is a term whose extension is limited to abnormal psychology. The term is improper in the realm of physiological Psychology. A delusion of grandeur is an example of an abnormal perception. The term illusion is generic, the term delusion is specific. Finally, hallucination is perception of an object which does not exist in the perceivers physical environment. A Pink elephant in a psychiatric hospital room is an example of hallucination ". -(Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass 1984) p. 121.

44. Indian Philosophy Vol. 2 (Op. Cit., 1927) p. 639.

our separate existence. Māyā keeps us busy with the world of succession and finitude ".⁴⁵ Again, Radhakrishnan considers māyā as a ' distortion of vision.'⁴⁶ This view of māyā is closely connected with the axiological context, because it also indicates the distortion of value. Under the influence of māyā, people are dominated by the unreal values.⁴⁷ Many times people to cognise the same appearance but they assign a different value to it. This is the axiological significance of the word māyā. Māyā in its concealment activities, may be described as ignorance (avidyā).

Radhakrishnan identifies māyā as a tendency to cognise the ' one as many ' and this is verily described as due to ignorance (avidyā). In Indian Philosophy Vol. 1, Radhakrishnan thus states that " Māyā in the sense of avidyā is recognised, since the display of the world hides the one spirit in it all ".⁴⁸ However, in History

45. Eastern Religions and Western Thought (Oxford University Press, 1939) p. 94.
46. This distortion of vision may be compared to the optical illusion of a " puddle " in the desert. Just as a desert ' puddle ' can be dangerous if the truth about it is not known māyā can also be dangerous if the truth about it is not known. But whether puddle or māyā exists or not is not felicitious, soteriological context.
47. " When the Hindu thinkers ask us to free ourselves from māyā, they are asking us to shake off our bondage to the unreal values which are dominating us. They do not ask us to treat life as an illusion or be indifferent to the world's welfare ", - Eastern Religions and Western Thought, Ibid. p. 47.
48. Indian Philosophy Vol. I (Op. cit., 1923) p. 513.

of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, Radhakrishnan used the term māyā in order to cover the whole cosmic manifestation whereas he uses the term avidyā to refer the ignorance of the individual.⁴⁹

Māyā as a power of concealment for Radhakrishnan, has a soteriological as well as axiological relevance but not an ontological one. It is one account of avidyā, the veil of ignorance on account of which the worldly beings (not liberated) are deprived of a vision of ' something beyond or more ' of what is apparent.

(6) Māyā as one-sided dependence explained :

It is evident from Radhakrishnan's writings on māyā in different contexts that māyā refers to the one-sided dependence of the world on Brahman, a kind of dependence of the effect on the cause. It is necessary on the part of the effect to depend upon the cause for its being but the reverse is not true. But on the part of Brahman, māyā indicates the maintainance of the integrity of the cause - the Absolute. The world which is also described by the word ' virāt ' for Radhakrishnan, is ' Absolute-dependent ' but on the contrary, Absolute is not ' world-dependent ' - Absolute is the only independent reality. In his own words : " While the world is dependent on Brahman, the latter is not dependent on the world. This one-sided dependence and the logical inconceivability of the relation between the Ultimate Reality and the world are brought out by the word māyā ".⁵⁰ According to Radhakrishnan the significance of the

49. History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western Vol. 1 (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1952) p. 280.

50. Bhagavadgītā (Op. Cit.) p. 38.

rope and the snake as an example by Śaṅkara , is this one-sided dependence of the effect on the cause. It does not refer to illusionism.⁵¹

As stated earlier, the concept of māyā is not a pivotal concept to formulate a system of philosophy by Radhakrishnan. It is rather a concept that makes some erroneous understanding of the basic issues of Indian Philosophy clear. And to give a rejoinder to erroneous interpretations Radhakrishnan very aptly explains the multi-dimensional implications of the concept of māyā as used in the Vedas and Upaniṣads . For him - none of the above six senses in which the word māyā may be used, can not construe the sense of illusion as it is wrongly interpreted, by a few later vedāntins. According to S. Radhakrishnan, as an epistemological concept māyā indicates the inexplicability of the exact relation between the universe and the Absolute, Phenomena and Noumena . As a creative force or cosmogonic concept, māyā , in Radhakrishnan's philosophy means, the self becoming power inherent in Īśvara . Introducing māyā as a primal matter Radhakrishnan tries to give the Sāṅkhya dualism a pertinent position in his own ' Monistic Idealism ' . He

51. In his different philosophical writings, Radhakrishnan clearly states that māyā does not mean illusion. He contends thus :
 " The phenomenal character of the empirical self and the world answering to it is denoted by the word māyā , which signifies the fragility of the universe. Māyā does not mean that the empirical world with the selves in it is an illusion, for the whole effort of the cosmos is directed to and sustained by the one supreme self, which though distinct from everything is implicated everything " . - The World's Unborn Soul (Oxford, Clarendon press, 1936) p. 25.

further without any adherence to ontological appealation brings out the soteriological and axiological relevance of māyā which shows his modernist tendency to make the traditional concepts suitable in the new changing socio-cultural context. And last but not least, he shows the 'onesided dependence' is indicated by māyā along with the maintenance of the integrity of Absolute.⁵²

52. Even in his History of Philosophy Eastern and Western (Vol.2, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1952, 1953) 1. 279 ¶ Radhakrishnan summerises his understanding of Māyā in Śaṅkara's System and this is completely identical with the summary of Māyā in the Advaita Philosophy (Indian Philosophy Vol. 2 , London , George Allen and Unwin, 1927, p. 573-574.). Radhakrishnan says : " The word māyā is used to denote different meanings in Śaṅkara's system : 1) That the world is not self-explanatory shows its phenomenal character , which is signified by the world māyā , (2) The problem of the relation between Brahman and the world has meaning for us who admit the pure being of Brahman from the intuitive standpoint and demand an explanation of its relation to the world, which we see from the logical standpoint. We can never understand how the ultimate reality is related to the world of plurality, since the two are heterogeneous, and every attempt at explanation is bound to fail. This incomprehensibility is brought out by the term māyā. (3) If Brahman is to be viewed as the cause of the world, it is only in the sense that the world rests on Brahman, while the latter is in no way touched by it, and the world which rests on Brahman is called māyā . (4) The principle assumed to account for the appearance of Brahman as the world is also called māyā. (5) If we confine our attention to the empirical world and employ the dialectic of logic , we get the conception of a perfect personality (Īśvara) who has the power of self expression. This power or energy is called māyā (6) This energy of Īśvara becomes transformed into the Upādhi, or limitation, the unmanifested matter (avyakta prakṛti) from which all existence issues. It is the

From what has said above, a very pertinent question may crop up here : " Does Radhakrishnan stretch the perimeter of Advaita Vedānta beyond recognition ? Or is his interpretation of māyā a radical departure from Advaita tradition ? Our humble reply would be in negative. In traditional advaita Vedānta, Brahman is the only reality, logically anything other than Brahman is unreal. At any rate, Radhakrishnan's inclusive , wholistic conception of Absolute- (Brahman as he sometimes calls it) rejects this inference as it suffers from the blemish of ' over simplification '. He argues that if the reality of Absolute is conceived as the inclusive whole, it logically includes the reality of the world. In other words, keeping as much affinity as possible with the Upaniṣadic conception of Brahman (Reality) , Radhakrishnan advocates an inclusive, wholistic conception of reality. Unlike this, Biblical conception of reality which influences the tradition of modern western thought is neither wholistic nor inclusive. The reality of God in Biblical tradition does not necessarily include the reality of the world. It is indeed true that it is difficult to understand for a person who is trained to accept consistently monistic conception of deity with the ultimacy of the world of multiplicity. However, without entering into subtle polemics, it may safely be said that Radhakrishnan very aptly contends that in the original Vedānta literature, the concept of māyā is present not in the sense of illusion as some latter vedāntins wrongly assume. In other words, the concept of māyā for

object through which the supreme subject Īśvara develops the universe ".

- History of Philosophy Eastern and Western Vol. I, (George Allen & Unwin 1953,) p. 279.

Radhakrishnan is absent in the Upaniṣadic texts in the sense of illusion. Radhakrishnan's interpretation also clarifies the intention of Śaṅkara's illustration by the perception of snake in a rope. " The appearance of snake which is really a rope is analogous with the appearance of the world which is really Brahman. Brahman appears to be the world. Brahman emanates or lets loose the world. But this " letting loose " is not a transformation because there is no change of substance ".⁵³ Radhakrishnan in interpreting māyā has left no stone unturned to retain the metaphysical Absolute of Vedānta Philosophy. For him, these two realms are not contrary, they are rather the two dimensions of one and the same Reality, namely, Brahman. To Radhakrishnan like Swami Vivekananda, the concept of essential unity of everything owes its origin to the Advaita Philosophy.⁵⁴

It may further be noted in this connection that Śaṅkara also does not deny the reality of the world altogether, he also affirms relative reality of the world. The world is relative, because it can not be absolutely categorised as real or unreal. Śaṅkara also admits the value of God or Saguna Brahman for realising the higher spiritual level of Brahman (Nirguna) as the absolute reality. He says that

53. D.A. Brave : Māyā in Radhakrishnan's Thought , (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1984) p. 153.

54. Vivekananda also says that the creation of the world, although on account of māyā , is not illusory. In his Neo-Vedāntism, he he clearly exposes that the finite and the infinite are not only different paths which men take through various tendencies, all lead to the same goal, as different streams having the sources in different places, lead to the ocean.

so long as man remains under the veil of māyā , the world along with all human values are real to him. Only the liberated person, — a person who has realised that Brahman is the only reality that is everything, including this world is Brahman , is not under the influence of māyā and not puzzled with the multiple modalities of the universe as many reals. Then where lies the difference between Śaṅkara and Radhakrishnan ? Our answer would be as follows : To sum up the whole story is to say that Śaṅkara regards the universe not as pariṇāma or transformation of Brahman , rather he regards the world as reflection (Vivarta) of Brahman. On the contrary Rādhakrishnan's all inclusive conception of absolute, which is said be on account of the influence he receives from the Hegelian Absolutist philosophical Tradition and his earnest desire to assimilate it with the Upaniṣadic understanding of reality, gives the world a real status as the integral aspect of reality itself. In other words, without the reality of the world, the absolute is no absolute reality. The world is not the vivarta or reflection or shadow of reality but the reality itself. Now it appears that Radhakrishnan tries to retain the pure metaphysical profundity of traditional vedānta philosophy on the one hand, and embraces a functional method of presentation of the theme for the present day enquirers. In other words, Rādhākrishnan without emphasising much on the doctrinal disput elucidates the different senses of use of the word māyā as against its illusory sense in order to meet the need of the day.

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

-
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 Sāṅkhya's Satkāryavāda in a certain extent, where it says the effect conceals in the cause before its creation ; but he disagrees with the Sāṅkhya'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.

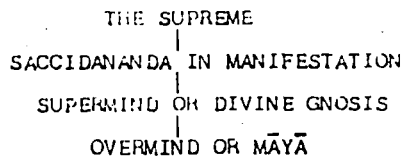
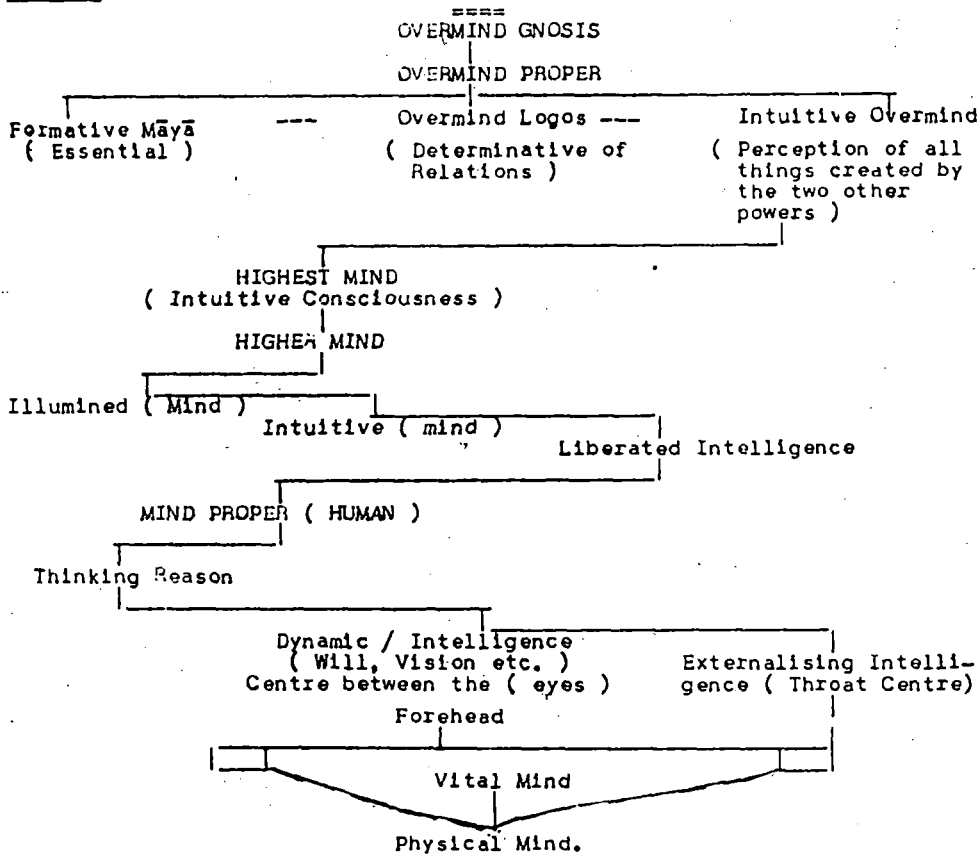


Table 2



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 Khalvidaṁ 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.

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 ".¹

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

1. Samsārādhvani tāpahnānukirana-prodbhūtadāhavyathā-khinnānām
jalākāṁksayā marubhūbibhrāntiā paribhrāmyatām /
Atyāsanna-sudhām vudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayam darśaya-tyeṣā
śāṅkara-bhārati vijayate nirvānasamdāyini // |580|
- Vivekacūḍāmaṇih (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. (Satyanṛte 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 Dharmarājādhvarīndra. 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 Śāṅkarīte 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 ^{the} Śaṅkarite one, it differs from ^{the} Śaṅkarite 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 Śaṅkara. For Śaṅkara, 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 (San̄-carati 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 ^{the} 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.² 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

2. Avyakta-nāmnī parameśāśaktir nādyavidyā triguṇātmikā 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.³

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 " Deliverence 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

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 Racanāvalī 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 (sevya) and this again implies ' a sevya-sevaka ' relationship. For this reason Swami Vivekananda may be described neither as kevalādvaitin nor Viśiṣṭādvaitin . He is not an advaitin of ^{the} 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.⁴ If someone forgets his very particular nature, he thinks himself as fearful, lack of

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 ' Tadādrastuh 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 scrutinize 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 ^{the} 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.⁵

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 ".⁶ 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 ".⁷ 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.

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.⁸

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

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." ⁹ 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

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."¹⁰ 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.

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." ¹¹ 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

11. "Marite cāhinā āmi sundara bhubane /

Mānaver mājhe āmi vāñcibāre cāi// - Kadi O Komal , verse entitled ' Prāna ' 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 psudo 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.¹² 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."¹³

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 Śāṅkara'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 Śāṅkara 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 (jagat) 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 ^{of} 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." ¹⁴ 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

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 ." ¹⁵ 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^vation, 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

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." ¹⁶

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.

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^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." ¹⁷

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

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 Sāṃkhya 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 .¹⁸ Since the world is a testimony of the Absolutes 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 ".¹⁹

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 śravana , manano 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^{of} 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."²⁰ 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

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-tam-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."²¹ 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.²² To cope with the demands of the societal atmosphere, Vivekananda even extends the connotation of the word ' mukti ' in the sense of freedom

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."²³ 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 .²⁴

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

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 antinomical 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 ." ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ 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

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.²⁷

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

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.

BIBLIOGRAPHY :

B I B L I O G R A P H YA : BOOKS

1. Amalānanda : Vedānta-kalpataru, a commentary on
Bhāmati, Bombay, 1948
2. Arapura, J.G. : Radhakrishnan and Integral Experience :
The Philosophy and world vision of
S. Radhakrishnan. Asia Pub. House, 1966.
3. Aurobindo, Sri : Sri Aurobindo vols 1 - 29, Birth
Centenary Library popular Edition,
Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972 .
4. _____ : The Life Divine, Pondicherry , Sri
Aurobindo Ashram, 1990.
5. _____ : The Essays on Gitā, Pondicherry,
Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1989
6. _____ : The Hour of God, Pondicherry,
Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1986
7. Bādrāyana : Brahma Sūtras, (Eng. Trans. by
Swami Vireswarananda) Mayavati
Advaita Ashram, 1982 .
8. Bagchi, Jogendranath: Advaita - Vedānte Avidyānumāna
(in Bengali) Calcutta , 1969 .
9. Basu, Sankari Prasad: Vivekananda O samakālin Bhāratvarsa
(in Bengali) vols 1 - 5, Calcutta,
Mandal Book House, 1981
10. Bandhyopādhyāya, H. : Upanisader Darśana (in Bengali)
Calcutta, Sahitya Sangsad, 1980.

11. Bhattacharyya, A. : Vedānta Darśana - Advaitavāda
(in Bengali) 3 vols, Calcutta
University, 1949.
12. _____ : Studies in Post Śāṅkara Dialectics
Calcutta University, 1936 .
13. Bhattacharyya, K.C. : Studies in Vedāntism, Calcutta
University Studies No 3, 1909.
14. Bhattacharyya Kalidas : ed. Recent Indian Philosophy,
Calcutta Progressive Publishers, 1963.
15. _____ : Bhāratīya Saṁskṛti O Anekānta Vedānta,
(in Bengali) , Burdwan University, 1982.
16. _____ : Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy
Calcutta, Dasgupta and Co. 1953.
17. Bhattacharyya, Vidhusekhara : The Āgamaśāstra of Gauḍapāda ,
Calcutta University Press 1943.
18. Bhattacharyya, M.L. : Lectures on the Vedānta Philosophy,
Agra 1895.
19. Burton, John Hill : Life and correspondence of David Hume.
2 vols, Edinburgh, 1846.
20. Brodov, V. : Indian Philosophy in modern times ,
Moscow, Progressive Pub. 1984.
21. Capra, Fritjof. : The Tao of Physics, London Collins
Publishing Group (Fontana paper back),
(5th impression), 1989.

22. Citsuka : Tattva pradīpikā , Bombay, Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1931.
23. Chakravorty, Satyojyoti : The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1991.
24. Chaudhury, Haridas : Sri Aurobindo : The Prophet of Life Divine, Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1973.
25. _____ : The Philosophy of Integralism or the Metaphysical Synthesis Inherent in the Teaching of Sri Aurobindo , Calcutta, Sri Aurobindo Pāṭhamandir, 1954.
26. _____ & F. Spiegelberg : ed. Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo , London, George Allen & Unwin , 1941.
27. Chaudhury, Roma. : Vedānta Darśana (in Bengali) Visva Bharati Visvavidyā Sangraha series-25, 1987.
28. Chatterjee, S.C. : Swami Vivekananda's Neo-Vedāntism and its practical application , Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Vol. Calcutta , 1963.
29. Chattopadhyaya , Rajagopal : Swami Vivekananda in the West, 6245, Renwick, Houseton Tx 77081, USA, 1993.
30. Das, A.C. : Sri Aurobindo and the Future of Mankind Calcutta University, 1934.

31. Das Rasbehari : Introduction of Shankara, Calcutta, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1968.
32. Das Upendra Kumar : Śāstramūlaka Bhāratīya Śaktisādhanā 2 vols, 2nd ed. Visva Bharati Research Pub., 1984, 1988.
33. Dasgupta, S.N. : History of Indian Philosophy, vol 1 Cambridge University Press, 1922 ; also Delhi Motilal Banarsidass 1975.
34. Datta, Bhupendranath : Swami Vivekananda - Patriot- Prophet A study . (Revised 2nd ed.) Calcutta, Nava Bharat Pub., 1993.
35. Datta D.M. & Chatterjee, S.C. : An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, 6th Ed., Calcutta University 1960.
36. Datta D.M. : Six ways of Knowing 6th ed. Calcutta University, 1960.
37. Datta Ramesh Chandra : Rgveda - Samhitā (Bengali Trans.) Calcutta, Jñāna - Bharati, 1963 .
38. Devanandhan , Paul David : The Concept of Māyā , (An Essay in Historical Survey of the Hindu Theory of the World, with special reference to Vedānta), London, Lutterworth Press, 1950.
39. Dharmarāja , Adhvarindra : Vedāntaparibhāṣā Banaras, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series 1954.

40. Ferm , V.T.A. : ed. Religion in Transition Newyork,
Macmillan, 1937.
41. Feys, J. : Evolution in Aurobindo and Teilhard ,
Firma, K.L. Mukhopadhyaya, 1973.
42. Flew Anthony : An Introduction to Philosophy, London,
Thames & Hudson, 1971.
43. Ganguly, H.K. : Radicalism in Advaita Vedānta
Calcutta University Vivekananda
Centenary Lectures 1975, Calcutta,
Indian Publicity Society, 1988.
44. Gambhiranda, Swami : Eight Upaniṣads , 2 vols, (English
Trans.) Mayavati, Advaita Ashram, 1939.
45. Gaudapāda : Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad (with his Kārikās),
Poona, Anandasrama , 1950.
46. Ghosh, Raghunath, : Sura Man and Society , Calcutta ,
Academic Enterprise , 1994.
47. Goudriaan , Teun : Māyā : Divine and Human , Delhi,
Motilal Banarsidass , 1984.
48. Īśvarakriṣṇa : Sāṃkhya Kārikā (Tr. Purnachandra)
Vedānta cancu) , Calcutta , West
Bengal State Book Board, 1983.
49. Jiva - Goswami : Tattva Sandarbha
Delhi , Motilal Banarsidass, 1984.
50. Joad , C.E.M. : Counter attacks from the East , London,
George Allen and Unwin, 1933.

51. Joshi V.C. : (Ed.) Sri Aurobindo : An Interpretation
Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1973.
52. Kapila : Sāṃkhya - pravacana - sūtra (tr. by
Nandalal Sinha) , Allahabad, Sacred
Books of the Hindus, 1915.
53. Lal, B.K. : Contemporary Indian Philosophy, Delhi,
Motilal Banarsidass, 1992.
54. Langlay, G.H. : Sri Aurobindo , Indian Poet, Philosopher
and Mystic , David Marlow Ltd. 1949.
55. Locke , John : An Eassay Concerning Human Understanding
ed. A.C. Fraser, Oxford , 1894,
56. Lokeswarananda , Swami : ed. Cintānāyaka Vivekānanda (in Bengali)
2nd revised edition, Ramkrishna Mission
Institute of Culture, Golpark, Calcutta,
1988.
57. Mādhavācārya , Sāyana : Sarvadarśana - sangrahaḥ (in Bengali),
Trans. Satyajyoti Chakravorti)
Calcutta, Sahityasree, 1984.
58. Maṇḍana Mīśra : Brahmasiddhi , Madras, Govt. Oriental
Manuscript Series, 1937.
59. Mac donell, A.A. : Hymns from the Rg - veda, London,
Oxford University Press, 1922.
60. Maitra, S.K. : An Introduction to the Philosophy of
Sri Aurobindo , Pondicherry , Sri
Aurobindo Ashram, 1941.

61. Majumder, Amiya Kumar : Understanding Vivekananda ,
Calcutta, Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar,
1972.
62. Maxmuller : ed. Sacret Books of the East ,
London, Oxford University Press, 1890.
63. Miśra , Vācaspati : Bhāmati, a Commentary on Brahama -
Sūtra - Śāṅkarabhāṣya (Bengali tr.
and elucidation by Sri Mohan Tarka -
Vedānta - Tirtha) Calcutta , Sanskrit
Pustak Bhandar , 1973.
64. Mukhopadhyaya , G.G. : Studies in the Upaniṣads , Calcutta,
Sanskrit College Research Series, 1960.
65. Mukhyānanda , Swami : Acharya Shaṅkara : An Interpretation ,
Kalady Advaita Ashram , Kerala , 1987.
66. Moore, C.A. : Essays in East - West Philosophy ,
Hawai, University of Hawai, 1951.
67. Moses , David G. : Professor Radhakrishnan and a Parliament
of Religions . , Madras, Christian
Littrature Society , 1950.
68. Mohanty , Jitendranath : Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought ,
London, Oxford University Press , 1992.
69. Monier - Williams : A Sanskrit - English Dictionary , Delhi,
Motilal Banarsidass, 1984.
70. Navajata : Sri Aurobindo , Delhi , National Book
Trust India , 1972.

71. Naravane, V. : Modern Indian Thought, Newyork, Asia Publishing House , 1964.
72. Nāgārjuna : Mādhyamika - Kārikā ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga Mithila Institute, 1960.
73. Nikhilanda, Swami : Tr. Vedāntasāra of sadānanda Yogindra, Māyāvati, Advaita Ashram, 1978.
74. _____ : Tr. Śaṅkarācārya's Ātmabodha, Madras, Sri Ramkrishna Math, 1947.
75. _____ : Tr. The Upaniṣads vols 1,2, and 3. New York, Harper & Bros, 1949, 1952 and 1957.
76. _____ : Vivekananda , A Biography , Ramkrishna Vivekananda Centre, New York, 1953.
77. Nivedita, Sister : The Master as I saw him , 13th Ed., Calcutta , Udbodhan, 1983.
78. Nikam, N.A. : The problem of creation : Concept of Māyā and Lilā in the Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo , London, George Allen and Unwin, 1960.
79. Nṛsimhasrama : Bhāvaprakāśikā , a Commentary on Pañcapādikā Vivarana , Madras, 1958.
80. O. Neil, L. Thomas : Māyā in Śaṅkara : Measuring the Immeasurable , New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass , 1980.

81. Panda, N.C. : Māyā in Physics, Delhi , Motilal Banarsidass, 1991.
82. Potter , Karl H. : Pre - suppositions of India's Philosophies ,New - Tersey, Prentice Hall , 1963.
83. Radhakrishnan , S. : The Bhagavadgītā (tran.) London, George Allen & Unwin, 1948.
84. _____ : The Brahma - Sūtra : The Philosophy of Spiritual Life, New York, Harper and Row , 1960.
85. _____ : The Creative Life, New Delhi, Orient paperbacks, 1975.
86. _____ : Eastern Religions and Western Thought London, Oxford University Press , 1969.
87. _____ : History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western (ed. 2 vols), London, George Allen & Unwin 1952 , 1953.
88. _____ : An Idealistic View of Life, London, George Allen & Unwin , 1932.
89. _____ : Indian Philosophy 2 vols, George Allen & Unwin, 1923, 1927.
90. _____ : Indian Religions , New Delhi, Vision Books , 1979.
91. _____ : The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore London, Mc millan, 1918; also published in Baroda, India, Good Companies, 1961.

92. _____ : Occasional Speeches and Writings
Oct. 1952 - Feb., 1959, New Delhi,
Pub. Div. Ministry of Information
and Broadcasting, Govt. of India
1960.
93. _____ : President Radhakrishnan's Speeches
and Writings, Second series, May 1964-
May 1967, New Delhi, Pub. Div. Ministry
of Information and Broadcasting , Govt.
of India , 1969.
94. _____ : The Reign of Religion in Contemporary
Philosophy, London, Macmillan, 1920
95. _____ : Religion in a changing World , London,
George Allen and Unwin, 1967.
96. _____ : The World's Unborn Soul , Oxford ,
Clarendon Press, 1936.
97. Raju , P.T. : Idealistic Thought of India , Cambridge,
Harvard University Press, 1953.
98. _____ : Indian Idealism and Modern Challenge,
Candigarh , Punjab University , 1961.
99. Rāmānuja : Śribhāṣya 2 vols, Madras, A.V. Co.,
1909 ; also (Bengali tran. by Yatindra
Rāmājunaçārya) vol. I Sri Balaram
dharma sopan , 24, Pargonas, 1978.
100. Rammurti , A. : Advaitic Mysticism of Śāṅkara,
Santiniketan, Visva Bharati Advanced
Centre of Philosophy , 1974.

101. Ranganāthananda , Swami : Science and Religion , Māyāvati,
Advaita Ashram, 1982.
102. _____ : Vedānta and the future of Mankind
Mayavati Advaita Ashram , 1982.
103. Ray , B.G. : Contemporary Indian Philosophies
Kitabistan, Allahabad , 1947.
104. Reddhi, Madhusudan,V. : Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy of Evolution,
Hyderabad , Institute of Human study,
1966.
105. _____ : Avatarhood and Human Evolution,
Hyderabad, Institute of Human Study,
1972.
106. Reyna , Ruth : The Concept of Māyā : From the Vedas
to the 20th Century, Bombay, Asia
Publishing House , 1962.
107. Rolland , R. : The Life of Vivekananda and the
Universal Gospel (Tr. E.F. Malcon -
Smith) , Mayavati Advaita Ashram,1979.
108. Śaṅkārācārya : Brahma - Sūtra - Bhāṣya (Tr. - Swami
Vireswarananda) Mayavati, Advaita
Ashram , 1982.
109. _____ : Vivek - cudāmani (Tr. in Bengali -
Swami Vedāntananda) Patna ,
Ramkrishna Mission Ashram , 1984.
110. Saha, Sukharanjan : Advaita Theory of Illusion , Calcutta,
Progressive Publishers , 1982.

111. Saraswati, Madhusudana : Advaita Siddhi with Laqhu-Candrikā , Bombay, Nirnaya sagar press, 1917 ; also Bengali Tr. - Sri Jogendra - nāth Tarka - Vedānta - Tirtha with Sri Rajendranath Ghosh , Calcutta , Sanskrita Pustaka Bhāndar , 1338 B.S.
112. Sen , Nanilal : A Critique of Viparyaya , Calcutta , Rabindra Bharati University, 1965.
113. Sengupta , P. : (edited) Smarane Manane Vivekananda , Calcutta, Barnali, 1991.
114. Sengupta , S.C. : ed. Sri Aurobindo : Homage from Visva Bharati , Santiniketan , 1977.
115. Sharma C.D. : A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy , Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass , 1978.
116. _____ H.L. : The Wisdom of Vedānta , G D K Publication, 1981.
117. Sharma , Pramathnath : Māyāvāda (in Bengali) Calcutta , Visva Bharati Publication , 1979.
118. Sharma , R. : The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo Locknow, Bharatiya Prakasan Mandir , Kashi sadan , Pandariba , 1960.
119. Schilpp, Paul Arthur : ed. The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan , New York , Tudor Publishing Co. , 1952.
120. Sinha , J. : ed. S. Radhakrishnan (Commemoration vol) Allahabad, Leader Press , 1953.

121. Sinari , Ramkant . A. : The Structure of Indian Thought
Springfield , Illionis, Charles
Thomas , 1970.
122. Shastri , Prabhu Dutta : The Doctrine of Māyā in the
Philosophy of the Vedānta , London,
Luzac , 1911.
123. Srivastava , R.P. : Contemporary Indian Idealism , Delhi,
Motilal Banarsidass, 1973.
124. Tarkabhūṣaṇa, Sri Pramathnath : Vivarāṇa - Prameya -
samgrahaḥ of Vidyāraṇya (Bengali Tr.
and annotation), Kasi , 1334 B.S.
125. Visvarūpānanda , Swami : Vedānta - Darśana (Bengali Tr. and
annotation of Sāṅkarabhāṣya),
Udbodhan , 1993.
126. Vivekananda , Swami : The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda
vols 1 - 8 , Mayavati , Advaita
Ashram , (Birth Centenary Edition), 1962
1963, 1964, 1955, 1973, 1963, 1959, 1959 respec-
tively.
127. Woodroffe : Shakti and Shakta ; 4th edition, Madras
Ganesh and Co. Ltd., 1951.
128. _____ with Pramathanath Mukhapadhyaya : Mahāmāyā ,
Madras , Ganesh & Co. Ltd., 1925.
129. Wright , W.K. : A History of Modern Philosophy ,
New York, The Macmillan Co. , 1957.

B : A R T I C L E S

1. Acharya , R.K. : Sri Aurobindo and Professor Alexander :
Their Theories of Evolution, Mother India,
June - July , 1980.
2. Adidevananda. Swami : Modern Science and Vedānta , The Vedānta
Keśari , 29 , 1942 - 43.
3. Avalon , Arther : Sakti and Māyā , Indian Philosophical
Review 1, 1977.
4. Basu , M. : National Integration : Philosophy of
Swami Vivekananda , Visva Bharati
Journal of Philosophy 12 , 1985.
5. Banerjee, A.K. : Brahmasūtra and the Theory of illusion,
Calcutta Review , 48 , 1933
6. Banerjee, Kalikrishna : The Nature of ignorance, Journal of
Philosophical Association , Nagpur, 3,
1956.
7. Bhattacharyya, C. : On avidyā or ignorance, Philosophical
Quarterly , 27 , 1954.
8. _____ S.N. : The Doctrine of Māyā , Prabuddha Bharata,
42, 1937.
9. _____ : Māyā and Avidyā , Prabuddha Bharata , 62,
1957.

10. _____ Dinesh Chandra : Vedānta : Śāṅkarācārya O
Vivekananda (in Bengali) in
Cintanāyak Vivekananda ed. Swami
Lokeswarananda , 2nd edition, R.K.
Mission Institute of Culture,
Golpark , 1988.
11. _____ Kalidas : The Advaita Concept of Subjectivity,
The Visva Bharati Journal of Philosophy
8, 1972.
12. _____ Vidhubhusan : Advaita Vedānte adhyāsa (in Bengali)
Visva Bani , Calcutta , 1963.
13. Bhadra , N.K. : Is the world Unreal ? Prabuddha Bharata,
48, 1943.
14. Bhuteshananda , Swami : Benedictory Address , Parliament of
Religions, Calcutta , September 11,
1993. Prabuddha Bharata , 99,
January 1994.
15. Brahmācāri Medhācāitanya : Swami Vivekanander Navavedānta
(in Bengali) in Cintanayaka Vivekananda,
ed. Swami Lokeswarananda , 2nd edition,
R.K. Mission Inst. of Culture, Golpark,
1988.
16. Chattopadhyaya, S.N. : Māyāvāda (in Bengali) Mānasi, 1910.
17. _____ B.K. : Māyā and Vijñānavāda (in Bengali)
Udbodhan , 1915.
18. Choudhury , Ahibhusan De : Māyā (in Bengali) Udbodhan, 13, 1915.

19. Choudhury, A.K. Ray : Māyāvāda , Journal of Deptt. of Letters , Calcutta University, 1, 1934.
20. _____ P.J. : Science and Vedānta , Bulletin of R.K. Mission Institute of Culture , 8, 1957.
21. Chakraborty , Amalendu, : Vedānter Āloke , Acārya Śāṅkara O Swami Vivekananda (in Bengali), Udbodhan , 95, 1993.
22. Chakraborty, N.B. : Falsity of falsity , Our Heritage ,3, 1955.
23. _____ : Vivekananda O Vedantā : Chicago Bhāṣner Prekṣāpāṭe (in Bengali) , Udbodhan , 94, 1993.
24. Dandoy , G. : An Essay on the doctrine of the unreality of the world in Advaita , Catholic Herald of India , Calcutta 1919.
25. Datta, P.G. : The Doctrine of Māyā , Philosophical Quarterly 12, 1936.
26. Das , Satyahari : The Category of Adhyāsa (in Bengali) Udbodhan , 40 , 1938.
27. Das Rasbehari : The Falsity of the World, The Vedānta Keśari , 27, 1940.
28. Das , A.C. : The awareness of ignorance , Calcutta Review , 118 , 1951.
29. _____ : Brahman and Māyā in Advaita Metaphysics, Philosophy - East - West , Honolulu , 2, 1952.

30. Dasgupta , Sanghamitra : The Concept of Māyā and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Prabuddha Bharata vol 98, Sept. 1993.
31. Dev , G.C. : The Doctrine of Māyā in Vedānta, What it implies ? Journal of Asian Studies , 5 , 1960.
32. Dubey , S.P. : The Vedāntic Heritāge of Swami Vivekananda , Prabuddha Bharata , 98, Sept. 1993.
33. French , Hal . W. : The Impact of Swami Vivekananda on the World Parliament , Prabuddha Bharata , 97 , Sept. 1992
34. Gahananānda , Swami : Swami Vivekananda's Message to the West . Prabuddha - Bharata , 99, Jan., 1994.
35. Ghosh , Rajendranath: Vedānta Ki ? (in Bengali) (what is Vedānta ?) Udbodhan , 11, 1908.
36. _____ Sisir Kumar : Aurobindo's Spirituality , The Visva - Bharati Journal of Philosophy 22, 1985.
37. Hart , I. B. : The Old doctrine of māyā and modern science , Aryan Path 1, Bombay, 1930.
38. Ingalls , Daniel H.H. : Śāṅkara on the Question : Philosophy, East and West 3, 1953.

39. _____ : Śaṅkara's Argument against The
Buddhists , Philosophy East and West
3 , 1954.
40. Malkani , G.R. : Creation or illusion , Philosophical
Quarterly , 2 , 1926.
41. _____ : A justification of Mayavada ,
Philosophical Quarterly , 18 ,
January 1943.
42. _____ : The Relation of false identity ,
Philosophical Quarterly , 97 , 1964.
43. Mukhopadhyāya Gobinda Gopal : Swami Vivekananda darśan
(in Bengali) □ Philosophy of
Swami Vivekananda □ in Cintanayak
Vivekananda , ed. Swami Lokeswarananda,
R.K. Mission Institute of Culture, 1988.
44. Mukhyānanda , Swami : Māyā and its cognates , The Vedānta
Keśari , 74 , Sept. 1987.
45. _____ : The Status of the Universe , Prabuddha
Bharata , 87 , Sept. 1982.
46. Mumukṣānanda , Swami : Mānavatavāda : Buddhadeva O Vivekananda
in Cintanayak Vivekananda ed. Swami
Lokeswarananda , 2nd edition , R.K.
Mission Inst. of Culture, Golpark, 1988.
47. Nagarjuna Rao , P. : The Concept of Māyā in Advaita , The
Vedānta Keśari , 55 , Sept. 1968.

48. Namboodripad , E.M.S. : Ādi Śaṅkara and His Philosophy : A Marxist View , Social Scientist , 17, 1989.
49. Nayak , G.C. : Does Advaita Vedānta advocate Illumination through Analysis , The Visva Bharati Journal of Philosophy , 23, 1987.
50. _____ : Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo , Darśan Mañjari , (The Burdwan University Journal of Philosophy) vol 2 , 1985
51. Organ , Troy : An Interpretation of Māyā , The Visva - Bharati Journal of Philosophy 6, 1970.
52. Pathik : Māyāvāda O Jagat (The Doctrine of māyā and the world), (in Bengali), Udbodhan , 1918.
53. Pessein, J.F. : High value of avidyā , Review of Philosophy and Religion , 1, 1932.
54. Radhakrishnan , Sarvepalli : ' The Doctrine of Māyā : Some Problems . In the Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy, ed. E.S. Brightman , New - York , Longmans, Green , 1927.
55. _____ : My Search for Truth in ' Religion in Transition , ed. V.T.A. Ferm , New York, Macmillan , 1937.

56. _____ : ' Reply to Critics ' in The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ed. P.A. Schil'pp , New York , Tudor , 1952.
57. _____ : The Vedanta Philosophy and the Doctrine of Māyā , International Journal of Ethics , 24 , 1914.
58. _____ : The Vedantic approach to Reality , The Monist , 26 , 1916
59. Ramkrishnan , S.O. : The Doctrine of Māyā , The Vedanta Keśari , 49 , 1962.
60. Ramanna , Raja : Swami Vivekananda and Modern Science, (Beng. tr. by Swami Lokeswarananda) in Smarane Manane Vivekananda , vol 2, Ed. Dr. Pradyot Sengupta , Barnali , Calcutta , 1991.
61. Reddhi Madhusudan : Māyā and māyāvāda : A Critical Retrospect, The Vedānta Keśari , 51 , 1964.
62. Sarma , R. Nagaraja : Is Advaitism an adequate answer to Buddhism , The Proceedings of Indian Philosophical Congress , 1, 1925
63. Sarvananda : Advaitism or Māyāvāda , The Vedānta Keśari 1, 1914.
64. Sastri , Kokileswar : What is māyā and why is it anirvacanīya ? The Vedānta Keśari 17 , 1930 - 31.

73. Sundarn , P.K. : Realism of Śāṅkara and the world
Illusion , in Essays in Philosophy
presented to T.M.P. Mahadevan ,
Madras , 1962.
74. Tarkatirtha , J. : Adavitavedānte avidyā (in Bengali)
I Avidyā in Advaita Vedānta | Our
Heritage , 9, 1961.
75. Tirtha , Vivekananda : Illusory world , Brahma - Vidya ,
Kumba. Konam , 52 , 1953.
76. Tathagatananda , Swami : Swami Vivekananda and the Harmony of
Religions , Prabuddha Bharata , 99 ,
Jan 1994.
77. Verma , R. : The Doctrine of Māyā , Agra University
Journal of Research , 1953.
78. Vinay Kumar U.A. : Essence of Self and Adhyāsa in Advaita,
Journal of Indian Philosophy 16, 1988.