

CHAPTER - 4

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SARVEPALLI

RADHAKRISHNAN'S PHILOSOPHY :

THE CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ IN SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN'S PHILOSOPHY

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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-aison 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 Śaṅkara). 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.

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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 ' anirvacanīya ' 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 Paramātman 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, anirvacaniya . 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 Bhaḡvadgītā 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 Mādhyamikas 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 upanīṣad 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 śāṅkhya dualism has always been a source of philosophical inspiration to Radhakrishnan. But the difficulty with the Sāṅkhya 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 Sāṅkhya dualism and the Vedāntic non-dualism. The Sāṅkhya 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 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 mān 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.