

P R E F A C E

In this work I have tried to give an analysis of the concept of 'Māyā' as conceived and interpreted in some distinguished philosophers (viz. Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan). This analysis consists the discussion of the ethical implication of this concept.

The discussion of this paper reflects the tradition in what sense the Vedas, the Upaniṣads employed the word 'māyā'. It also consists (in first two chapters) Śāṅkara, Nimbārka, Sri Chaitanya's concept of Māyā. In these two chapters we have noticed how the word 'māyā' was envisaged originally as an energy or power though in later stages it got a diversification of meaning as divine and undivine. Gradually, Advaita Vedānta philosophy emphasizing on the unique predicateless, immutable characteristics of Brahman is popularly understood as advocating the illusoriness of this world in the name of the doctrine of māyā. However, Viśiṣṭādvaitavāda, Dvaitādvaitavāda, Vaiṣṇava Philosophy etc., had highlighted on the intimate relation of love in the concept of Lilā in between the Infinite and the finites.

The next remaining chapters (i.e. third, fourth, fifth, sixth) include the idea of māyā and its implication in ethical life of some Indian philosophers and distinguished personalities in recent time. In this case, this is also noteworthy that none of them

conceived the finites as mere illusion. In spite of that the finites are described as self-imposed limitations and manifestation of the Infinite out of self-delight or joy. Consequently they laid much emphasis on selfless active-participation in worldly life to enrich it as ideal towards perfection. In other words it is tried to find out a concrete reply of the charge presented by some philosophers specially western philosophers that Indian philosophy is non-ethical. The philosophers I have mentioned have taken a life-oriented approach which has infused new blood in the ideas of Indian philosophy. The intensity and importance of the problem attracted me much that, is it the case that an attitude of world-negation characterises Indian philosophy? The alleged attitude of world-negation in India has been inevitably associated with the concept of 'māyā'. I felt interested in studying whether the doctrine of māyā is really linked to a belief in the unreality of the world and non-ethical approach.

In this context I have made references of original texts the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Gītās etc. and of various commentary books which are useful to realise the philosophical approaches. My objective was not simply to compile only the arguments of earlier philosophers but also to arrange them in a systematic manner with my own interpretation.

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