Introduction

The appellation of the proposed thesis, on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, is "Consciousness and Being in the Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo." The aim of this thesis is to establish that Consciousness and Being are identical in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. With a view to substantiating the claim of this thesis, we have considered many theories of the eminent philosophers of the East and the West. For a systematic discussion we have divided the thesis into six chapters to develop our theme by a comparative study of different philosophical views. All these views have been discussed in the light of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.

The Chapters are as follows:


ii) Mind and Consciousness: Sri Aurobindo.

iii) Empirical and Transcendental Consciousness.

iv) Different Levels of Consciousness.

v) The Integral Yoga.

vi) Consciousness and Being.
Now, we shall give a brief idea of these Chapters one by one.

Chapter I

The first chapter consists of five sections. The first section is concerned with different meanings and nature of Consciousness. This requires a discussion of the different theories of consciousness such as, Materialism, namely, Mechanical Materialism, Dialectical Materialism, Behaviourism and Central-state theory which are discussed in the second section. The third section deals with the theories of consciousness as propounded by Buddhists and Vedantists. The fourth section discusses the theory of consciousness as we find in the philosophy of Berkeley and Hegel and the concluding section is confined to Consciousness as expounded by Sri Aurobindo.

This chapter shows that consciousness has been analysed by different philosophers in different ways. Some philosophers have identified consciousness with the functions of the body. Some consider consciousness as independent of body and understand it to be spiritual. There are some philosophers who conceive consciousness in the epistemological sense as something which performs the function of knowing. Others think it to be the ultimate foundation of the world. Their idea of
consciousness is ontological or metaphysical. But all these theories have been criticised from Sri Aurobindo's viewpoint. Sri Aurobindo considers Consciousness as an unchanging, self-luminous ultimate Reality. It is the Being, the essence of everything. It descends into the worldly objects, otherwise evolution of Spirit will be impossible. Consciousness as propounded by Sri Aurobindo is more satisfactory than any other theory of Consciousness given by different philosophers.

Chapter II

The second chapter is concerned with the nature of Mind and its relation with Consciousness as considered by Sri Aurobindo.

Mind, in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, is the third evolutionary product. The very tendency of Mind is to cut and limit the forms of everything from the indivisible whole. Mind tries to realise the Absolute Pure Consciousness but when it tries to go beyond its own limit and conceive the whole, it falls down into 'the ocean of the intangible' from its own position and can not possess the Infinite; on the other hand, the Infinite possesses it. In this chapter we have also shown the different aspects of Mind and its relation to Consciousness.
Chapter III

The third chapter consists of two sections. The first section deals with empirical consciousness and transcendental consciousness which require a discussion of Kant's and Husserl's theories. It is true that both Kant and Husserl were more interested in the epistemological questions and their epistemological interests bound them to a narrow view of reality.

Distinction between Mind and Supermind in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy has an epistemological as well as a metaphysical significance. Sri Aurobindo realised that the Being of knowledge and the Being of reality are one and the same Being. So his explanation of transcendental consciousness gives a comprehensive view of knowledge and reality.

In the second section we have discussed antahkarana, sākṣīn of Vedānta philosophy and made comparative study with similar notions in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. It is shown that Advaitins accept only the reality of sākṣīn whereas Sri Aurobindo admits the limited reality of antahkarana and the fullness of reality as obtained in sākṣīn.
Chapter IV

This chapter contains five sections. The first concerns itself with Mind, Overmind and Supermind, as analysed by Sri Aurobindo. The second section analyses different types of Ignorances and cause of these ignorances. It is also stated that our realisation of Truth can vanquish Ignorance or limited knowledge.

In the third section, we have discussed Māyāvāda of Śaṅkara and Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of it. Śaṅkara admits the unreality of worldly objects due to Māyā, the inseparable, indefinable, governing power of Brahman whereas Sri Aurobindo considers Māyā as limitation but not craft by which Brahman produces the world.

The fourth and fifth sections of this chapter deal with a comparative study between Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and 'Sri Aurobindo and also between Whitehead and Sri Aurobindo.

It is shown that both Chardin and Whitehead have failed to give a proper explanation of everything. But we find a complete explanation of everything in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo who established everything on the basis of his mystical spiritual realisation.
Chapter V

In this chapter we have analysed Integral Yoga as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo. In order to have a clear idea of Integral Yoga and to establish the importance of this Yoga, we have brought to light other Yogas — such as Hathayoga, Rājayoga, Tantra, Triple path of Yoga, i.e., Path of Knowledge, Devotion and Action.

In this chapter we have shown that all the Yogas have a partial contribution in realising the reality. But it is true that for the radical change of human beings in their life, intervention of the supramental consciousness is necessary. In this connection, Sri Aurobindo introduces Integral Yoga for the attainment of Integral knowledge where the self-fulfilment is possible and human beings will be able to realise that supreme reality which dwells over all and in all and at the same time manifests itself in multitude objects in the world.

Chapter VI

This is the concluding chapter of this thesis, where we have established the truth that Consciousness and Being are same in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. In this connection, the concept of Being is discussed as given by Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel and also by Kierkegaard and Heidegger — the Existentialist philosophers. But these
philosophers are unable to give a satisfactory explanation of the relation between Being and finite objects.

But all these questions have found proper answer in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. He welcomes both finite as well as Infinite Being. According to him, the reality descends itself into finite objects in order to come back to itself. Naturally, Being, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the ultimate truth and the world is real precisely because it exists in Being and is created by Conscious Energy which is One with Being. This Being is self-evident, origin, support and secret reality of all things. This Being appears as - the Supra-cosmic Existence, the Cosmic Spirit and the individual Self. It is also shown by Sri Aurobindo that Being and Becoming, Being and non-being are not contradictory but complementary to each other. Consciousness is also the Absolute truth to him. It is also unchanging, self-luminous reality. It is the Being, the essence of everything. Naturally, it is clear to us that the nature of Being and Consciousness shows that both are identical in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, which we have wanted to establish in this thesis.