Chapter - IV

Different Levels of Consciousness

Section I: MIND, OVERMIND, SUPERMIND

Mind, Overmind and Supermind, these three levels have been accepted by Sri Aurobindo for the manifestation of the Absolute. These three levels are related to one another and one level leads to the next level to ascend higher, to the ultimate reality. In this section we want to discuss these three levels of Consciousness and hope to bring out their relations to one another.

Sri Aurobindo, we know, gives importance to finite objects in which reality is potentially inherent. From his evolutionary theory, we see that each and every step of evolution is necessary for the proper realisation of the Absolute consciousness. Mind, we ordinarily think, is one of the essential stages of the evolutionary process, without which our life will remain in the lowest state of existence.

"Mind", Sri Aurobindo says, "is an instrumental entity or instrumental consciousness whose function is to think or
perceive". (The nature of Mind has already been discussed in the second and third chapters). This Mind wants to attain the whole but has a tendency to divide or to limit the whole into parts as if the parts enjoy their independent position. It tries to attain the Infinite but all its endeavours end in failure though it throws back the light of the Infinite. The Mind has a tendency to divide everything and we find that (i) the Infinite appears within the limitations of space and time. (ii) It manifests Itself as many conscious souls as we find in Sāmkhya philosophy. (iii) These conscious souls have slanted themselves '.... into a divided habitation of the extended unity.' But these Purushas are unable to create separate universes because the same Prakriti and One Reality are inherent in all Purushas. A question may be raised at this point. If the Supermind is the source of Mind and guides it, then why does the Mind possess the tendency to divide everything?

In The Life Divine Sri Aurobindo says that it is the Ignorance which is the source of such divisions and due to this Ignorance, Mind never grasps the unity. It is unable to understand that the universal and the particulars are two phases of the same Reality or revelation of the Absolute Spirit. It is well-known to us that the universe remains

unexplained by the Mind. Mind is not the faculty of knowledge, but helps us to have knowledge. We can say that the Mind only tries to know and lastly its knowledge ends in a 'glass darkly'. The utmost effort of Mind is '.... to train our obscure consciousness which has emerged out of dark prison of Matter, to enlighten its blind instincts.'

In the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, we have seen, the various divisions of Mind which no doubt throw a new light on its nature. These are 'Mind', 'Dynamic Mind', 'Psychic Mind', 'Higher Mind', 'Physical Mind', 'Thinking Mind', etc. He thinks that Subliminal Mind has a closer touch with Consciousness than any other Mind. So we can say that this Mind is not devoid of Consciousness, its nature is that '.... it lives between half lights and darkness, amid probabilities and possibilities, amid partly grasped aspects, amid incertitudes and half certitudes.' Realisation of Truth is possible for the Mind only '.... when the Veil is rent and the divided mind overpowered, silent and passive to a supramental action.'

Such realisation of the Mind leads itself to a superior position where it enjoys more truth than it can have. This is then a link between Mind and the Supermind and it is called the Overmind. In this progress of Mind to the Supermind we can notice a number of evolving layers. It has been recognised

by Sri Aurobindo that the human intelligence rises to the Supermind through four stages. (1) Higher Mind, (2) Illumined Mind, (3) Intuitive Mind, and (4) Overmind.

Higher Mind:

Our normal mentality has an urge to ascend to a Higher Mind which is luminous thought mind and free from any obscurity. It possesses the truth, identity held in itself and realises every conception by self-power. So this consciousness is higher in nature and formulates itself on a basis of self-existent all awareness and manifests itself in single ideas and sees Truth at a single view. Here the knowledge is not an acquired knowledge, but a self-revelation of eternal wisdom.

Besides the aspect of knowledge Higher Mind has another aspect, i.e., the aspect of will and of the effectuation of truth which is dynamic in nature. Here this Mind works on the basis of the being, the life and the body. The power of thought plays an important role, i.e., it tries to create, to deliver, to purify through knowledge and leads us to a new and superior consciousness, i.e., Illumined Mind.

Illumined Mind:

Illumined Mind has a greater force and spiritual light. This Mind works not by thought but by vision. Here thought
occupies a secondary position but ordinary human mind conceives thought as the highest or the main process of knowledge. The Illumined Mind which works by vision, is a consciousness of greater power for knowledge; its inner sight is greater and more direct. So we have a vision of totality in this Illumined Mind.

Intuitive Mind:

Higher Mind and Illumined Mind no doubt enjoy superior position but still they will remain incomplete without reference to a third level, i.e., the Intuitive Mind, where the perception is closer, more than sight or conception. Here the consciousness is a power nearer and more intimate to knowledge of identity. This Mind leads to the Overmind, a bridge between Mind and the Supermind.

Overmind:

Overmind is the most important and highest among these intervening layers. The Overmind is an agent of spirit, possesses mental gnosis for which it has a connection with the Supreme light which supports the activities of the Overmind. In this Mind, a direct communication with the Truth-light is possible. Overmind links Knowledge - Ignorance with the greater Truth-consciousness and "... at the same time with its brilliant lid it veils the face of the greater Truth for
our sight. Sri Aurobindo says, "Overmind is a delegate of the Supermind Consciousness", through which the Supermind transmits its realities to Overmind but this does not mean that the Supermind and Overmind enjoy the same status. On the other hand, there is a line of demarcation between both. Supermind sees Integrality, essential truth and the total truth of things and maintains inseparable unity and full consciousness of things. But such realisation of Integrality is absent in Overmind. It is aware of essential truth. Though 'Overmind knows their oneness, can realise it in a spiritual cognition, yet its dynamic movement, even while relying on that for its security, is not directly determined by it.'

If powers of the reality are considered as Godheads, then Overmind releases a number of Godheads which themselves possess power of creating separate worlds of their own, with a power of having a relation with the others. In Overmind everything functions independently, has its own principles of development, even possesses the power to combine with the others in a more harmonised way. Overmind differs from Mind on various points: Mind justifies everything on the basis of sense and reason, the ultimate result ends in diversity but "Overmind consciousness is global in cognition."

6. Ibid., p. 278.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 279.
9. Ibid., p. 281.
always tries to reconcile all things, considering them as the manifestation of One Existence. Mind considers Matter, Life-Force as the ultimate reality, out of which every object evolves and ultimately these objects resolve in Matter or Life-Force. Or sometimes it accepts Real Idea as the cause out of which objects are born and go back to it, whereas Overmind consciousness holds that a material, a vital, a mental, and a spiritual world-formula are true and can form a world of their own and at the same time are able to form a world in combination with each other. This is possible, for behind all these creations there is Supreme conscious – existence and manifestation of this reality is possible through processes. This difference between Mind and the Supermind has been described vividly in the lines '.... mental reason and irreconcilable differences', 'Overmind intelligence as co-existent co-relatives', 'what to the mental reason are contraries are to the Overmind intelligence complementaries'.

It is true that Overmind conceives the essential unity, accepts it as the basis of everything, but it is unable to realise, like Supermind, its intimate and everpresent secret reality.

Thus we see that the Overmind reveals a partial truth and leads to the highest level where our realisation of Truth or

10. Ibid., pp.281-82.
Absolute is possible. The Supermind is superior in status to Mind and Overmind. But this does not mean that Mind has no relation with the Supermind; on the other hand, it has a close relation with the Supermind, otherwise any account of the Supermind is impossible to human consciousness. Mind is also identical with the Supermind in essence but its true nature remains unrevealed. In our practical field Mind's operation is contrary to Supermind. Mind can accept the organised form of different things but is unable to grasp the ultimate unity.

The Supermind is the all-comprehensive reality in the evolutionary process, a truth-consciousness which lives in truth, manifests itself in this world of Matter. This Truth Consciousness is far from Mind-consciousness and has no touch with Ignorance. Here we have a direct truth perception, a will, a knowledge due to which knowledge of universal order is possible. It reveals the truth. The Supermind reconciles for us all oppositions, limitations, divisions, contraries in the one and the Infinite and "All our life as well as all our essential being is transformed into the possession of Sachchidananda."\footnote{Sri Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga (SARCL, Vol.20), p. 406.}

Three characteristics of the supramental knowledge have been recognised by Sri Aurobindo. (1) All knowledge of the
Supermind is the knowledge by identity and oneness. It is a total knowledge. It is directly truth-conscious, a divine power of immediate, inherent and spontaneous knowledge.

The Supermind is the creator of its own truth. In its inferior form, it is intuition and through an evolutionary process it ascends towards a supramental knowledge.

Mind, Overmind and the Supermind are closely related with one another, although the three levels have differences among themselves. The Mind is limited in its power. So there is the necessity of a higher principle to fulfil the conditions where Mind fails. This principle is no doubt Sachchidananda. Mind with its limited power, as a result of evolutionary process, ascends to the Overmind, the link between the Mind and the Supermind. This Overmind contains truth to some extent. But the Integral knowledge is impossible in this state. This stage rises to a higher level; our ascending to the Supermind through Overmind necessarily implies a transition from Nature to Super-nature. In our supramental change, a unification between our outer and inner nature is necessary.

From the above discussion, we should not have any doubt that the Supermind occupies a very important position in the

13. Ibid., p. 758.
philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. It is the highest plane of Being where we will be able to know that all Existences are One Existence, all Consciousnesses are One Consciousness, all Ānanda is due to One Ānanda. This knowledge lastly reveals to us Sachchidananda. Sri Aurobindo declares in this connection, "Supermind is an eternal reality of the Divine Being and the Divine Nature." ¹⁴

Section II: Role of Mind and Supermind in the Context of Knowledge

Sri Aurobindo's concept of Mind and Supermind appears in a new light in the context of human knowledge. The analysis of knowledge as given by epistemologists is completely different from the word 'knowledge' used by Sri Aurobindo. In this connection some questions arise. These are: What does Sri Aurobindo understand by knowledge? Will Sri Aurobindo accept the idea of knowledge as given by epistemologists? Sri Aurobindo thinks that knowledge is integral knowledge that presupposes an integral Reality; for it is the power of Truth-Consciousness which is itself the consciousness of the Reality. He thinks of realisation of the ultimate reality which is called

by him '... the Self, the Divine, the Supreme Reality, the All, the Transcendent or the One in all these aspects.' 16

This knowledge, as expressed by Sri Aurobindo, shows that knowledge as defined by epistemologists is not knowledge in the proper sense of the term. The word 'knowledge' is understood ordinarily as cognition of the objects of everyday life. Sri Aurobindo thinks that such knowledge is not based on the Consciousness of the Infinite and hence it cannot be called knowledge, rather it should be regarded as ignorance as it does not reveal the Infinite self to us. This Ignorance although seems to us to be due to Matter and life is actually rooted in Mind whose very nature is to divide or to limit everything. Thus we see that the very origin of Ignorance is due to the limitation of Mind, where being is separated from its own Integrality or entire reality and its activities are guided by the separative development of consciousness because it veils the true nature of self and lives in a surface existence which is apparently real. Naturally, Self-limiting knowledge is confined to a single or limited field.

Taking our ordinary experience to be nothing but ignorance Sri Aurobindo proceeds to analyse the different types of ignorance. Our inability to understand the Absolute as the source

of being and becoming is called by him the (1) **Original ignorance.** When we try to know things within the limitations of cosmic becoming as bound by space and time, we become subject to (2) **Cosmic ignorance.** (3) The third is the **egoistic ignorance** on account of which we are ignorant of recognising the universal self that binds us with all being and becoming and think our limited egoistic mentality, vitality and corporeality as the true self. The changing life is regarded as real and we forget the eternal, becoming in the eternal as real. This situation leads us to the (4) **temporal ignorance.** When the surface becoming comes to be known as the only truth and the different layers of the consciousness such as the super conscient, subconscient, intraconscient and the circumscient which are beyond the surface becoming are disregarded, we suffer from (5) **psychological ignorance.** In our everyday life we forget the real elements of our becoming, the elements which control our life, body and Mind. We consider our life, body and Mind to be the real controlling principles. In this situation we have (6) **constitutional ignorance.** These six types of ignorance hide the real mystery of our Life. We remain satisfied with our inadequate and limited knowledge, thought, sensation and will, and continue to have our existence within the circle of pleasure and pain, our errors and desires. This attitude produces the seventh type of ignorance which is called by Sri Aurobindo the (7) **practical ignorance.**
We have thus Sri Aurobindo's theory of sevenfold ignorance, like the seven colours of the rainbow which enchant us, but hide the real colour of the sky.

We know that Sri Aurobindo accepts Ignorance in the sense of limited knowledge but the knowledge as interpreted by epistemologists is nothing but a form of ignorance for it does not reveal the ultimate truth or any Integrality; on the other hand, it is associated with a particular object. We have discussed the different types of ignorance, in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, where we see a reflection of particularity which arises due to our inability of understanding the real source of being and becoming. We accept objects in space and time or cosmic becoming within space and time as real and we also accept our body, Life and Mind to be the real controlling principles. These Ignorances veil the real significance of our life and we remain satisfied with our inadequate or limited ideas and thought. If we do not understand the true nature of objects, self and the world, we may call what we know to be knowledge. But Sri Aurobindo thinks that such cases of knowledge are nothing but different forms of ignorance. This shows 'knowledge' as understood by epistemologists is similar to that of 'Ignorance' as understood by Sri Aurobindo.

Our realisation of truth implies the disappearance of 'Ignorance' or limited knowledge. It is possible by awakening
our inmost soul or superconscinet self. As a result there can be a beginning of the spiritual knowledge with identity as its foundation and Ignorance must turn towards Knowledge. So the essential and Integral, the whole truth of reality or existence removes the limitation or separateness. Integral Knowledge is something that is already contained in the Integral reality. This Integral Knowledge transforms the individual by revealing its true nature and significance, without abolishing their individual existence and enables him to realise the Divine Reality. Such a Knowledge will help us to know all affirmations and negations, beings and all becomings of all objects about which we come to know that they are due to One Brahman — the reality, who does not confine Himself to any one aspect, but the whole consciousness with its complete knowledge builds the basis of Life Divine.

Sri Aurobindo says, "An integral knowledge must be a knowledge of the truth of all sides of existence both separately and in the relation of each to all and the relation of all to the truth of the Spirit."¹⁷ This knowledge contains the truth of all things, all existence, the truth of the universe and the truth of that which is beyond the universe. All these are to be transcended and ultimately we will have only Reality, the Absolute or in the language of Sri Aurobindo "All affirmations and negations are expressive of its aspects.

and it is through both a supreme affirmation and negation that we can arrive at the Absolute', 18 which is limited neither by Ignorance nor by our knowledge. So the ultimate aim of our life would be then to proceed from the lower reality of the Becoming towards the higher reality of the Being, i.e., from Ignorance to Knowledge. Thus our conception of knowledge and ignorance shows that there is no opposition between One and Many, Finite and Infinite, Form and Formless; on the other hand, they are complementary to each other and inevitable steps for the realisation of the truth. In this way, all the oppositions are cured by the soul. In fact, the Truth is One not only in a featureless Oneness which is beyond all relation but also in the multiplicity of the cosmic existence.

But it may be pointed out that the individual mind by its nature is limited and also a knower of fractions and worker of divisions but it is always seeking for knowledge. Besides this mind there is also a universal mind which by force of its universality knows the totality of its divisions yet lacks the essential knowledge but Integral knowledge is impossible without essential knowledge. But a perfect Truth-Consciousness possessing essential and Integral Knowledge is proceeding from the essence of whole, and from the whole to the parts. Such Consciousness enjoys world-knowledge and Integral knowledge.

18. Ibid., p. 636.
But from this one should not conclude that everything is unreal except Truth-Consciousness; on the other hand, everything is the creation of One Consciousness.

In modern times ego-centric attitude has been accepted as a valid standard of knowledge. This standard of knowledge, giving importance only to the capacity of Physical Mind or the personal mind, ultimately ends in egoistic illusion because human beings consider everything according to their own capacity which may not be true for others. The method which we require must be true to all experience but must be other than that which examines only the constituents of physical objects. Spiritual experience of human beings makes the possibility of acquiring the capacity of following the inner method due to which human beings are able to enjoy self-knowledge. In it the physical is as real as the supra-physical.

We know that the Absolute reality is the origin, support, secret Reality of all things, self-existent and self-evident but indefinable by mental language. Our self-consciousness, self-knowledge, a knowledge by identity can seize the reality in its fundamental aspects. This Absolute manifests itself in two ways, as a Being, the fundamental reality and as a Becoming which is the effectual reality, a creative energy which works out of the Being. When the Becoming knows itself as Being, it can know itself totally. The soul of the Becoming can obtain self-knowledge and immortality only when it possesses
the nature, the Infinite and Eternal and knows the supreme truth. Such knowledge is only the part of total truth of things because it only gives spiritual significance to the universe. Apart from it, another affirmation of our aim of life is that the fundamental reality of the Absolute is to be realised in our perception of Spiritual Existence, Consciousness and Delight of Being. It is supracosmic reality, self-existent, the ultimate reality underlying the whole manifestation. The Being is one but this oneness contains in itself an infinite plurality which is Infinite, the One is the All, the All-Existence. So the infinite multiplicity of One and the eternal unity of the Many are two aspects of the same reality on which the manifestation of the world is founded. The individual can never reach the highest by separating himself from the reality but the condition of fullness of the self-expressing spirit is the realised unity of three aspects of Truth — the Transcendent, the Universal, the Individual.

The starting point of the evolution is an involution of the Divine Existence in the Matter. This reality in its nature is Divine Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence, so the evolution must be an emergence of Divine Existence, Consciousness, Delight of Existence (The evolutionary process of the Absolute has already been discussed). The first business of human being must be to affirm himself in the universe
and also to exceed himself, one has to enlarge one's own being into complete being or it may be said that the natural man has to evolve himself into the Divine man.

So the knowledge which human beings have to attain is not the truth of the intellect, not right belief, right information about oneself and things but our aim must be to grow into our being, our being of spirit, and the being of the universal Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. In order to achieve this goal, the first step is, one should know that this life is not all, to realise that there are lives behind and states beyond and understanding this truth man will be able to conquer his present temporal ignorance by developing himself beyond the immediate moments of Time. The second step is that he should learn that his surface waking state is only a part of his being and removal of his psychological self-ignorance is possible, if he begins to fathom the abyss of the Inconscient and depths of the subconscient and the subliminal and scale the heights of the Superconscient. The third step is to find out that there is something in him which is different from instrumental Life, Mind and Body. There is an eternal self and spirit which guides him in his realisation. This realisation abolishes constitutional self-ignorance and he is able to realise step by step the unity of God, Man and Nature.
The evolutionary process of integralisation, widening and heightening is an ascent to the Integral knowledge out of the different ignorances. The constitutional ignorance is the crux of all ignorance, where the mental intelligence is the predominant principle, which depends upon Matter. The first step towards a real progress is to grow out of the limitations which arise due to materialised intelligence and it is our duty to heighten our force of consciousness. Such a step must liberate mental selves for the growth into full mental being. It lifts us one step out of the material being.

But Mind itself is not enough. Our labour of Mind and Life cannot have any solution until we conquer the obsessing lead of an inferior Nature, and integralise our natural being in the being of consciousness. Then constitutional ignorance changes into true knowledge of Being and Becoming. But conquest of our constitutional ignorance will remain incomplete, if we have not conquered psychological ignorance, for the two are bound together.

This psychological ignorance causes us to think that our waking self is the ultimate self, i.e., we have limited self-knowledge and our partly manifested consciousness is imperfect, for it is bound up by self-limitation and moves in a limited circle. But our aim should be to draw Consciousness freely from the ranges of our being, i.e., subconscient or intraconscient and circumconscient or superconscient.
I

But this is not all; "... we must enter into these inner and higher parts of ourselves by an inward plunge or disciplined penetration and bring back with us to the surface their secrets." 19

In the superconscience state, beyond our present level of awareness, there are numbers of planes of mental being. Of these mental heights, the Supermind is the crown of all mental planes, full of Bliss and able to govern and remould our lower being. By the force of remoulded consciousness, our evolution could ascend from mental to supramental and the supreme spiritual nature.

But our evolutionary progress must be associated with the removal of our present temporal ignorance. We are limited by our physical memory and awareness of our present life, which is due to our preoccupation of our mentality with the material plane and life. But extension of mind or an opening into the subliminal and superconscient, into the inner being, and realisation of eternal existence is possible, if the preoccupation is relaxed. But this does not necessarily imply the rejection of the life in the body and a constant living on the inner and higher plane of the Mind and the Spirit. An ascent and stepping back is necessary for the heightening of our consciousness into its spiritual principle. So the

19. Ibid., p. 733.
ascent must be from our transient life to the eternal life of our immortal Consciousness. Thus we have an Eternal spirit which considers all the world, and all lives for various self-experience.

At the same time we are free from our egoistic ignorance for which the Divine Life is unattainable, because our ego-sense causes falsification of our true individuality by limiting self-identification of it with this life, this mind and this body. It also prevents us from living as the universal individual. It causes separation from God, Self which is in all existence. But the ego can no longer survive, as our consciousness changes into the height and depth. By losing its wall of separation, the ego overcomes its limits and it perishes by the loss of its limits. But disappearance of the ego does not destroy our true individuality but produces only a transformation that replaces the separative ego by the Purusha.

In this manner, i.e., awakening into the spirit, there is a dissolution of the cosmic ignorance for we have the knowledge of our timeless immutable self, which is beyond cosmos and possesses itself in cosmos. Such knowledge is the basis of Divine play which reconciles One and Many, Finite and Infinite, unity and multiplicity and discovers Divine in the universe. We can understand that the Absolute is the
source of all circumstances and thus we have self-knowledge in place of practical ignorance.

In this way there is a transformation of the life of the Ignorance into the Divine life of the Truth-Conscious Spirit, a change from the mental to supramental. So by knowledge, Sri Aurobindo understands this Integral Knowledge, the Ultimate Knowledge or the Supramental Knowledge.

But criticisms have been levelled against the supramental knowledge given by Sri Aurobindo. G.C. Nayak says that Sri Aurobindo's thesis is neither verifiable nor falsifiable, because his theory is devoid of understanding from the standpoint of our mind and intellect and the verification of such a theory is possible by spiritual verification, not by finite experience. So such a theory is empty or valueless. 20

Professor Nayak's criticisms can be considered on two grounds. Firstly, we have to see, whether Sri Aurobindo's thesis about Integral knowledge is a meaningless proposition. A proposition is meaningless, when it makes no sense in terms of Grammatical syntax. Sri Aurobindo's proposition is not nonsense grammatically. Secondly, a proposition is meaningless, when we do not know how to verify it. But here Professor Nayak is accepting verification in a narrow sense. He is talking

about verification from the ordinary man's point of view, but from that point of view, even scientific propositions about the nature of physical objects are not verifiable. So, we have to speak of different orders of experience. What is verifiable from a higher order of knowledge may not be verifiable from a lower order, as propositions of science cannot be verified from the ordinary level of experience. We can now speak of another order of experience—the spiritual level. It is logically conceivable that such an order may exist, though many of us may not have an acquaintance with such an order. So, Sri Aurobindo's thesis does not have a logical inconceivability, and it cannot be called meaningless. The charge of emptiness cannot be brought against such a thesis.

In response to such criticisms against Sri Aurobindo's theory, it may be pointed out that Sri Aurobindo shows the development of the spiritual man on the basis of his spiritual experience. Sri Aurobindo realises that spirituality is something else than intellectuality and such spirituality is nothing but a progressive awakening to the inner reality of our being, self, to a spirit which is other than Mind, Body, Life. It is an aspiration of human being to realise or to enter into contact with the greater Reality which pervades the whole universe as well as us, which results a transformation into a new being. For this transformation Nature has to follow four main lines which are religion, occultism, spiritual
thought and an inner spiritual realisation and experience. The last one is most important and can achieve the change of mental being into spiritual being.

Spiritual experience does not turn away from life, on the other hand, the spiritual man tries to discover his spiritual being and its tendency is to look more beyond life than toward life. The change is individual, not collective which indirectly acts on human race. There is, according to Sri Aurobindo, a spiritual evolution in Nature which develops a basis of spiritual Consciousness and creates a foundation of that which is Eternal in the truth of Spirit. So it possesses an indirect relation to human life. This exposition requires a discussion of the difference between intellect and intuition from Sri Aurobindo's point of view.

Sri Aurobindo described intuition as the supramental knowledge that supplies the intelligence from below with its first materials and data. A deeper power of knowledge establishes a link between Mind and what is above it. This intuition possesses fourfold order of knowledge which are truth-seeing, truth-touching, truth-hearing and also finds out the exact relation of truth to truth. He also says, if it were possible for us to free our intuition from our mental action, then we could have the knowledge of ultimate truth through it and such an intuition Sri Aurobindo calls supreme intuition.
The intellect is only a degradation and reflection of the Supermind which must be enlightened. Our thinking and reflecting mind are necessary to form a systematised idea of the goal. It is true that the intellect itself is unable to bring us into touch with spiritual reality, but only helps us by a mental formulation of the truth of the spirit that can be applied in a direct way.

This discussion shows that Sri Aurobindo admits the necessity of both intellect and intuition but intuition is in a superior position to intellect.

Another objection against Sri Aurobindo is that mystical knowledge is purely subjective or mental formation but such an objection arises due to our inability to understand the nature of spiritual knowledge. The objection misunderstands the real status of the supramental knowledge.

We can show the superiority of Sri Aurobindo's position by pointing out that he accepts knowledge in a wider sense which was not accepted by the philosophers who understood knowledge in the ordinary sense. He conceives the ultimate Reality as Consciousness - Force and its realisation is the highest type of knowledge. So the objections raised against Sri Aurobindo's theory have to be considered in relation to spiritual knowledge. All the criticisms against Sri Aurobindo's views are raised from the aspect of ordinary experience, which
is called by Sri Aurobindo — Ignorance. It is not possible to appreciate the idea of Integral knowledge from the perspective of ordinary knowledge, as the former stands on a completely different level.

Professor Nayak's contention can also be considered from the perspective of Rudolph Carnap's criticism against Martin Heidegger's concept of the Nothing. Carnap pointed out that Heidegger's proposition 'The Nothing nonthings' is senseless, because the word 'Nothing is not a substantive, but a logical sign and therefore does not denote any thing. So it is against the logic of language to assert that there is any such thing. Again, the sentence 'The Nothing exists' is self-contradictory, because the existence of the entity is denied by its definition. Against this charge Heidegger says that it is true enough that we cannot talk about the Nothing, as though we were talking of the rain outside or a piece of chalk or any object whatever. Since it is not-a-being, or a quality of being it must remain inaccessible to science. But its inaccessibility to science is not a conclusive demonstration of its meaninglessness.

Being itself is inaccessible to science, since it too is not a being, nor the quality of a being. But to say that Being and the Nothing cannot be grasped by science does not mean that there are no means whatever by which they might be reached.
The same position can be upheld from Sri Aurobindo's point of view that his idea about Integral knowledge is not empty of meaning.

Section III: MĀYĀVĀDA and Sri Aurobindo's refutation

Consciousness is the ultimate reality which is to be attained — this is the end of both Advaita Vedānta and Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. But their differences arise on the point of their interpretation of the status of finite objects. One accepts finite objects to be illusory due to Māyā, the other gives importance to both the finite and the Infinite and at the same time holds that without finite or limited objects evolution of reality is impossible.

Now, if Consciousness is the ultimate reality, which manifests itself in all the objects of the world, then the problem of unreality of worldly objects does not arise. But Sri Aurobindo thinks that the unreality of the world has a relative sense. It means that if we accept the world to be real, separated from the foundation of Consciousness, then it is an illusion but as integrated with the supreme consciousness and as manifesting it in a partial way, the world is not an illusion. Sri Aurobindo also speaks of Māyā to be limitation. It is also ignorance about the nature of the reality, but he does not mean that the Māyā is a craft by
which Brahman produces an illusion. Now with this idea in mind, we have to understand the nature of Maya and how it gives rise to the unreality of the world in a relative sense. We have also to see in this connection why Sri Aurobindo does not accept the interpretation of Maya as given by Samkara.

It is well known to us that Sri Aurobindo gives us an integral philosophy of reality. In his philosophy, we come to know that the Supermind is the Truth-Consciousness, possesses no division, has no limitation and in it there is an identity between the knower and the known. Now a question may arise, what would be the value of the world of finite objects after our realisation of pure consciousness as the ultimate reality? The answer to this question is different in different systems of Indian philosophy. It is also true that a common point is discovered in the different systems according to which Maya or ignorance is the cause of phenomenal appearances. This concept is predominant and most important in the Vedanta philosophy of Samkara but it differs from Sri Aurobindo's angle of vision.

Advaita philosophy recognises the reality of the unconditioned and unqualified Brahman and it is one without second. It is true that both unity and multiplicity and both Brahman and the world cannot be equally real. It is stated, 'were both unity and multiplicity real, we could not say of one
whose stardpoint is that of wordly action that he is caught-in untruth .... it could not be said 'from knowledge comes deliverance'; moreover, in that case the knowledge of manifoldness cannot be transcended by the knowledge of unity.'

And individual, God, world of objects which we perceive are due to an indefinable principle — Māyā or avidyā which is neither real nor unreal. Śāṅkara conceives the reality of empirical appearances so long the Brahman-knowledge is not revealed and such appearances have pragmatic value. Brahman in association with Māyā is God and Brahman under the delusion of Māyā is Jiva. The tendency of Advaita philosophy is to realise the Truth only through negation.

What is this Māyā which deceives us? Māyā is error or false knowledge or this knowledge is called by Śāṅkara in his Adhyāsa-Bhāṣya 'atasmin tad-buddhi,' i.e., what is non-existent, we take as existent. For example, when we have knowledge of a snake in a piece of rope, we have erroneous knowledge. Here we impose snake on a piece of rope for we have knowledge of real snake as seen and when we perceive a piece of rope, we remember that perceived snake and impose snake on a piece of rope due to the knowledge of similarity. Such erroneous knowledge is generally due to insufficient

21. S.B., ii.i.

22. S.B., i.i.
light or for the defect of eyes. But when the real rope becomes known, erroneous knowledge of the snake at once disappears and we say 'this is rope and not snake' and we have knowledge. Similarly due to our agna, we super-impose the unreal world on the real Brahman and take the world as real but when we have right knowledge, we realise the unreality of the world and realise the real Brahman which is not negated by anything.

This May is not real for if it is real, it must appear all the time - past, present and future which is impossible and must be negated by real knowledge. Again it is not unreal. If so it would never appear. So it is indescribable and unspeakable in nature. This May is the guiding principle of Brahman, inseparable from Brahman, as heat is from fire.

Supersensible Reality is pure consciousness, foundational, the universal fact of human life. It is beyond space and time or is not within the realm of change, it does not require help of anything for then the being would include non-being. It transcends any opposition of parts and whole, finite and infinite, temporary and permanent. This 'Reality is sat (real), meaning that it is not asat (unreal). It is cit (consciousness), meaning that it is not acit (unconsciousness). It is ananda (bliss) meaning that it is not of the nature of pain (dukhha svarupa). This reality is Brahman, which is Sachchidananda.

But illusion is not something unreal; on the other hand, it possesses truth temporarily, so long it is not sublated by Brahman knowledge. Unreal is unreal for ever but illusion is not unreal like the son of a barren woman. For example, our knowledge of a snake in a piece of rope is true so long it is not negated by real knowledge. But by real knowledge we understand that it is not snake but rope. Here we have a case of illusory knowledge having partial truth.

Thus we see that Advaita philosophy gives us such a theory which accepts only the reality of Brahman. So there arises a question, what is the relation between the world we perceive and the ultimate reality?

Both the world and the Absolute reality do not enjoy the same status. The world is in space and time and so present today and absent tomorrow and reveals only phenomenal character. The world in the process of struggling wants to attain the infinite though it fails to attain that. The relation between world and Brahman is not understood by human beings. Māyā is, responsible for the appearance of objects, neither independent nor related with reality, and plays an important role, and this Māyā conceals the real and projects what is unreal. The world of variety screens us from the real.

But Sri Aurobindo does not accept Māyā in the sense used by Śamkara. He says that human being by his physical
mind admires the truth of what is the actual, the physical, the objective and verifies everything by positive reason and objective evidence. But man has also a Life-Mind which remains unsatisfied with actual and tries to verify its possibilities and has the passion for novelty. Man enlarges his desires but is dissatisfied with everything and seeks to have something more than what life is able to give. This situation leads Physical-Mind to a state of agnosticism and begins to doubt everything and the Vital-Mind being dissatisfied denies the truth of life and existence and ultimately assumes that everything is illusory - *Māyā*.

The concept of *Māyā*, like that of *Brahman*, *Īśvara*, *World* and *Jīva*, is one of the most famous concepts of Indian philosophy and there is a diversity of opinions regarding the interpretation of the nature and function of *Māyā*. The concept of *Māyā* is found in *Vedas* and *Upanisadic* literature. It is *Śaṅkara* who explains the concept of *Māyā* as a philosophy of cosmic illusion, i.e., *Māyāvāda*.

But in *Sri Aurobindo's Integral Advaita* philosophy, *Māyā* has an extensive use. He thinks, unlike *Śaṅkara*, that *Māyā* is not an illusory something but contains truth. On the other hand, the doctrine of *Māyā* reveals and establishes the supremacy of Spirit over the Matter, but from it one should not conclude the unreality of Matter; through an evolutionary
Matter ascends towards Spirit. Māyā, in the true sense of the term, shows that apart from the Infinite, the world has no value and this world is a phenomenal manifestation of the Absolute which is a medium for the development of not only of our finite souls but also the manifestation of Sachchidānanda. The world is necessary for realisation and manifestation of Brahman. But here Śamkara has assumed the Māyāvāda as a mental formulation of our limited experience of reality. He admits only the nirguṇa aspect of Brahman which does not manifest Itself but Sri Aurobindo says, Reality is the Ultimate, the Supreme, the Universal, the Mother, the creatrix of the world and the all powerful will of the universal creatrix brings out what is inherent in the transcendent.

Sri Aurobindo says that all creations and becomings are self-manifestation or the manifestation of Truth-Consciousness. But for the creation of different objects in conformity with reality, Māyā is recognised as such a power of Infinite consciousness which shapes finite appearance of the Infinite reality. But this truth is concealed by the illusion of Māyā that leads us to realise that reality is in all but not all is in reality. The universe has truth but it is not the whole truth, the original truth and the ultimate fact. Sri Aurobindo wants to say that Brahman is Eternal reality. On the other hand, the world which is created, comes into
existence in time and perishes in time. So it has no reality.

If we consider the universe with a vision of reality, we find that the world itself "... expresses a foreseen Truth, obeys a predetermining Will, realises an original formative self-visions. - it is the growing image of a divine creation."

The world can be considered from the perspective of knowledge of reality. The latter point of view reveals that it is an expression of the truth realising itself in the original form of self-visions. The universe manifests the growing image of the divine creation. The world is not \textit{Māyā} but "... realise it as \textit{Līla}, the play, the child's joy, the poet's joy, the actor's joy, the mechanician's joy of the Soul. ... Himself the play, Himself the player, Himself the play ground." \citep{24,25} Sri Aurobindo states that \textit{Māyā} is of two types: the lower \textit{Māyā} or Mind and the higher \textit{Māyā} or the Supermind. The lower \textit{Māyā} exists in individual, where the individual thinks of himself as self-sufficient particular being having no relation with universal. At this level the mental play deceives us to realise that He is in all and all is in Him and enables us to consider everything in a pragmatic way. The 'lower \textit{Māyā}' does not bind us within the limitation of mental play, it leads us into the play of the 'higher \textit{Māyā}' which is to be firstly overpassed, then embraced for it is

\citep{24} Sri Aurobindo, \textit{The Life Divine}, p. 120.

\citep{25} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 103.
the play of the infinite, glories of knowledge and ecstasies of illimitable love.

But the illusionist philosophers have totally neglected the distinction and link between the 'higher māyā' and the 'lower māyā'. For this reason they hold that mental Māyā or Overmind is the creatrix of the world. But Sri Aurobindo says that Overmind cannot be the creatrix of the world, the world neither would be an illusion, nor a reality but be an 'inexplicable paradox', for 'Mind is only an intermediate term between the creative governing knowledge and the Soul imprisoned in its works'. This Mind is one of the instruments of His ascending and descending processes of evolution but not the secret creatrix, not the original source of cosmic existence.

Sri Aurobindo in his philosophy expresses the integral truth of Śaṅkara's philosophy in a comprehensive way and in the explicit form ultimately reveals a new and higher content. He replaces the concept of Māyā by the Supermind, a Divine Force, the dynamic self-vision. The way of elimination of contrast between the creative Absolute and its manifestation with Ignorance, avidyā which operates in it, is different.


in Śaṅkara and Sri Aurobindo. Śaṅkara followed the 'negative process' of abandoning everything that bears only a pragmatic reality, a temporary significance, whereas Sri Aurobindo accepts everything as the manifestation of the Divine and when the Divine is seized both within and without, all is in Him and He is in all. Thus we see what appears temporary to Śaṅkara is transformed as a mode of the manifestation of the Divine in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. So Sri Aurobindo does not speak of liberation from Māyā but liberation through Māyā, as a lila of the Divine which is the goal and destiny of the human being.  

Māyā is the consciousness and force of this self-existence, we cannot separate Māyā, the Conscious-Force or Cit-Shakti from Reality as burning power of fire is inseparable from the fire. Similarly, Brahman developed in self-manifestation cannot be covered by this Yoga-māyā or Conscious-Force.

Section IV: Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Teilhard de Chardin started his exploration on the basis of scientific investigations, described everything in terms of their inherent possibilities, and lastly, he established a theory of spiritualistic mentality. His philosophy is

totally devoted to a synthesis among the world of matter, life and Spirit and at the same time the unity of the many with One. We see that unification is the main purpose in his philosophy. Another most important and at the same time fundamental point is the theory of transformism or evolutionary process which is "... a light illuminating all facts, a curve that all lines must follow." It is clear to us that Chardin thinks of material objects as the starting-point of the cosmic evolution and Omega point is the superior state of evolution. According to him, biological development of the different creatures shows a tendency that the universe is making progress to an ultimate goal.

The first of his evolutionary process, is matter which gives rise to a complex structure full of limitless energy and invariable precondition of life. As he says, "'Plurality, unity, energy: the three faces of matter.'" Matter has a potentiality, for which from matter life proceeds and such a development was possible because matter had the potentiality. This shows that life is not an accidental phenomenon but is a stage in the development of the universe. He says, "'Life, evolves out of matter, begins with the cell which is the natural granule of life.'" Chardin got his idea

30. Ibid., p. 40.
31. Ibid., p. 79.
of relationship between matter and life from biological sciences. He thinks also that the whole universe contains a relation of interdependence, passing from one stage to another and matter has a structure of disorder but at the same time it proceeds towards an ordered whole, i.e., the manifestation of energy which is found in matter. So life is a continuity of matter but matter has characteristics that are different from life which means that there is a discontinuity.

In the further stage of progress, life comes to evolve the conscious human being, a culmination of evolution. Chardin would say that such evolution is possible because the possibility of man is potentially contained in the force of life. In Chardin's philosophy, Man is not a caprice or accidental product, but he is the crowning point of cosmic evolution possessing supreme characteristics. Man is the higher form of evolution, where human personality is revealed.

These different orders of evolution suggest that there is a spiritual element inherent in the whole creation as it is found in the Christian theology that the universe is the body of God. Man is no doubt a finite being but also he has a spiritual tendency towards the unification with God. It may not be God proper but may be the manifestation of God in Christ. The God in Christianity, comes to share with man's existence and destiny. Here God is called the
Omega point, as the end of human journey. At this point the noosphere will be intensely unified and will have achieved a 'hyper personal' organisation.'

God is present in the universe. He is Transcendent, Eternal and Personal. There is a continuous progress in the universe and man has to recognise and proceed towards the ultimate point-God but Chardin never says that man can completely identify himself with God.

Chardin thinks that the ideal of Christ being realised by every man will give him access to God. All the bad things will disappear from him and he will become the perfect man. He thinks that such men will construct an ideal society in which everyone will be free from sin, will be full of love and attain the greatness of Christ. "Mankind as a whole", says Chardin, "accordingly achieve more intense, more complex and more integrated mental activity, which can guide the human species up the path of progress to higher level of hominisation." Society does not enjoy itself consciousness and has no objective value, on the other hand, compassion, mutual action, sense of humanity have an important role for man's progress. It is also true that man's understanding the truth of his being will help him to realise 'Cosmic sense of a spirit of the earth', due to which human thought comes to harmony with one another.

32. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
33. Ibid., p.17.
Ideas of order and harmony in the universe have been derived by Chardin from Science. The scientific picture of reality has made him understand the order and harmony in the universe and man will be able to establish the kingdom of God in this earth by developing the spiritual qualities, which are found in him, for the whole universe is animated by Spirit. He could say that it is the one Spirit which is in all things of the world and man. The Absolute is present in everything that lights up and expands. In the words of Chardin, "Everything is filled with an essential flavour of the absolute." 34

So, the order of Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary process is:

Matter → Life → Man → towards God (The Omega point is God, though man cannot reach the identity with God. i.e., identification between man and God is absent in his philosophy).

The above discussion of Chardin's philosophy may make us wonder that his thought and that of Sri Aurobindo do have the same philosophical attitude. It is true that both have similarities to some extent but Sri Aurobindo has explained philosophical truth in a greater and more comprehensive way.

and the fundamental realisation of the philosophers is different. Here our task is to show some points of similarity and difference between them to get an insight into the philosophical revelations of Sri Aurobindo.

The similarities between two great thinkers can be stated in the following points:

1. From the philosophy of both, Chardin and Sri Aurobindo, it is known to us that they have accepted an ultimate goal towards which human beings are proceeding. Chardin says that God, in the evolutionary process, is the ultimate Truth. Sri Aurobindo accepts Brahman to be the ultimate reality.

2. Potentiality of the Spirit in matter has been believed by both of them. Chardin says, "Matter has always had a history; it is subject to a genesis; it is in process of ascending towards higher states. Matter is a limitless source of energies, with the potentiality to produce forms in which it will go beyond itself." 35 "Substance or Matter", in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, "is only a form of Spirit." 36

3. Sri Aurobindo speaks of "Supermind", a state of Bliss, a bridge between the world and ultimate reality, ".... as a Truth-Consciousness in which the Divine Reality, fully manifested, no longer works with the instrumentation of the

35. Ibid., p. 52.
Ignorance." This point resembles Chardin's thinking of man where he says, "Man is nothing else than evolution becoming Conscious of itself" and "that consciousness of each one of us is evolution looking at itself, and reflecting on itself."  

4. The last point is that man full of perfection is nearer to God, and ideal society which is full of love is based on the perfect life of human being. Teilhard de Chardin says, "... matter and life were only the half-hidden symbol of this structural organisation of society." In Sri Aurobindo we have seen that our realisation of truth, revelation of Spirit in ourselves out of Vital, Mental, Physical existence help us to have a Divine life on earth. Sri Aurobindo says, "A total spiritual direction given to the whole life and the whole nature can alone lift humanity." A total transformation of the whole being, which is possible by our realisation of Consciousness, is needed for bringing a new collective existence.

After discussing the similarities of the thoughts of Chardin and Sri Aurobindo, we can look forward to their differences in the following way.

38. Emile Rideau, op.cit., p. 47.
39. Ibid., p. 56.
1. Sri Aurobindo, an Absolutist, establishes his view on the basis of mystical experiences. He himself believes that our life is *Yoga* and our realisation of Truth is possible by *Yoga*. But here Chardin got his idea from the investigation of Science. In support of this view we can quote a remarkable line, from the book, *Teilhard de Chardin - a guide to his thought*, 'The whole of Teilhard's work is based initially on a scientific philosophy of the material and biological universe.'

2. Both Teilhard and Sri Aurobindo believed that human beings have to reach an ultimate destiny. Sri Aurobindo has described this goal as **Brahman** or **Sachchidananda** and the whole universe is the manifestation of this reality. Chardin may think that the universe has a physical as well as a spiritual value and as the body of God, it is endowed with a minimum degree of consciousness but admitting such a view he makes a separation between God and the world. Here Sri Aurobindo differs because he thinks, **Brahman** manifests Itself as the world. Unless the reality comes down to the lower objects, the lower objects or beings can never rise to the higher. There is an identification between the world and the Spirit.

3. In Chardin's philosophy we see three stages of the evolutionary process. These are (i) structure of matter, (ii) living beings, and (iii) man. God is supposed to be the

ultimately point of the world but God is not coming into existence as a product of evolution though He is the creator of the world and controls the universe. But evolutionary processes, in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, are Matter, Life, Mind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness-Force, Existence and is Supreme Consciousness manifesting itself in different stages.

4. Chardin says that the ultimate goal is to become Christian or the perfect man who is nearer to God though there is not a complete unification of man with God as stated in Christian theology. But Sri Aurobindo does not speak of God in the traditional sense of the term. He says that every one can become the Supermind by knowledge and Spiritual experiences and also through self-knowledge or realisation of Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo believes in the two processes of evolution—descending and ascending processes which are necessary for the manifestation and evolution of the Supreme Consciousness. It is not only the fact that different orders are coming into existence as progress towards the Supermind but Brahman is also going down to the different stages to give rise to different orders, which are at a distance from the Supreme Consciousness. But just in this description of the evolutionary process Chardin speaks of the ascending order but he is silent on the descending order. This is so because there is a separation between the existence of God and other beings.
In conclusion, it can be said that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is oriented to the realisation of the one vision of Truth but Chardin has presented a philosophy which reveals many partial truths, all struggling to realise a unity, though the unity remains always a distant goal. So Teilhard's philosophy ends in such a position that it is very difficult to reconcile his view either with a scientific theory of evolution or with orthodox Christian teachings.

Section V : Sri Aurobindo and A.N. Whitehead

The last section of the fourth chapter deals with a comparative study between the philosophy of Whitehead and that of Sri Aurobindo. Whitehead started his life as a mathematician but eventually he offered us his speculative metaphysics regarding the nature of world, God, etc. He was dissatisfied with the Newtonian view of the world as composed of atoms which occupy one single place at one single moment. In his philosophy he admits twenty seven categories of which the following eight categories of Existence are of importance.

1. Actual Entities or Final Realities or Actual Occasions
2. Prehensions
3. Nexus
4. Subjective Forms
5. Eternal Objects
6. Propositions
7. Multiplicities
8. Contrasts or Modes of Synthesis of Entities in one Prehension. 42

Among these eight categories of existence we shall discuss only actual occasions, prehensions, eternal objects and apart from them our analyses will also include the notions of process and creativity, the primordial nature of God. In conclusion we shall present a discussion of comparative study between Whitehead's concepts and those of Sri Aurobindo.

Actual Occasions or Actual Entity:

Whitehead calls his philosophy, the philosophy of organism. He thinks that such a doctrine refers to the creation of a multiplicity on the basis of component elements. He says that everything of the world is bound up with one another due to internal relation and the whole world is an organism. Naturally, internal relation is the foundation of the real world. The universe is a life which develops through different phases. In discussing his theory of organism, Whitehead analyses the ultimate constituents of the world.

such as actual entity. Everything is an actual entity beginning from the smallest thing of the world to God. This actual entity is the final real thing out of which the world is made. These things differ from one another in gradations and functions. They are interdependent in nature. Whitehead speaks of 'concrescence' which means the name for the process where many become an individual unity, i.e., One. In the language of Whitehead, 'An instance of concrescence is termed an 'actual entity' or, equivalently an 'actual occasion','', which is analysable in nature.

Theory of Prehension:

Whitehead speaks of the notion of power, which explains the principle that things are found to be composite as a result of the organisation of actual entities. Actual entity can be analysed into prehension which is more concrete than actual entity. Prehension means the feeling due to which things are found in their unity. It represents the way in which an actual entity relates to the external world. So actual entities give rise to a togetherness which is called a nexus. Both actual entity and prehension are individual and particular. The theory of prehension, as interpreted by Whitehead in his philosophy, shows no reason in favour of the existence of mind. On the other hand, he establishes wonderful synthesis.

43. Ibid., p. 321.
where different events are synthesised and produce a concrete whole, a world of organism and mind is a result of the development of natural process. He says that Idealism is unfit for building any unification which Realism can easily aspire to. Whitehead wants to show how the abstract things are coming out of the concrete particular things and the process of becoming has its origin in the actual entity or in the character of the subject which is in the process of coming together with other actual entities. He calls it the Ontological Principle. Whitehead says, in his Process and Reality, "That every condition to which the process of becoming conforms in any particular instance, has its reason either in the character of some actual entity in the actual world of that concrescence, or in the character of the subject which is in process of concrescence."44 It means that the actual entities are the only reasons and they are the real internal constituents of the objects of the world. Prehension or feeling, which plays an important role in constituting whole, is to be considered in respect to (i) ".... the actual occasions felt, (ii) the eternal objects felt, (iii) the feeling felt and (iv) its subjective forms of intensity."45

The diverse feelings pass on to integral feelings in the process of togetherness. Whitehead has expressed this development of actual entities in the expression that many become

44. Ibid., p. 36.
45. Ibid., p. 322.
one. But not only the many become one but also one becomes many. This means that from one actual entity originate the different feelings which are many and organised, they become transformed into one. About these feelings Whitehead says that they are not conscious of an urge which is inherent in them. Consciousness develops later in the journey of actual occasions. But feelings have a vector character which means that they are oriented to the world.

**Eternal Objects:**

The above discussion of Whitehead's conception of the world shows that his philosophy is the philosophy of process. We have also seen how different regions of experiences are linked in one harmonious whole. But strictly speaking, the world is not only a process of change but also of stability and ultimate members of the universe do not change but alter their properties. It is also true at the same time that events could not have been known to be events, if they had not something enduring in them. The actual occasions have potentiality of becoming but what they will become depends on the act of ingression or of penetration of the eternal objects into the actual entities. They enter into the actual occasions and prepare the shape of things to become. Thus the whole universe is a process because it is a development and an evolution of the different actual
entities which come into existence one after another. Now, we will proceed to discuss the nature of eternal objects, which are beyond space and time, which are similar to that of Plato's ideas but is in space and time when they ingress into the events and this ingress helps us to have familiar objects of our everyday life.

**Inner Characteristics of Eternal Objects:**

1) Eternal objects are abstract in nature, i.e., their essence is comprehensible without any reference to any actual occasion.

2) The world of eternal objects is of possibility.

3) Eternal object is what it is. It is individual and enjoys 'individual essence'. It has also 'relational essence' which occupies midway position. It is said, "On the one hand, it refers to the 'eternal object' as the relatum in the scheme of relations. On the other hand, this status is said to be independent of the unique individuality of the 'eternal object'." 46 In *Process and Reality*, eternal objects are classified into two groups, i.e., the Subjective and the Objective. In objective group we see only 'mathematical

Platonic forms' and the subjective group involves '... an emotion, or an intensity, or an adversion, or an aversion, or a pleasure, or a pain.'  

Process and Creativity:  

The actual entity has a determinate bond with every item in the universe. The completion of the actual entity is its satisfaction and actual entity is not only subject but is also a superject. It is not only being but has also a potentiality. The process of becoming is two-fold, it is of a particular type by the determinateness of the actual world but it is also indeterminate due to the conceptual prehension by eternal object. An actual entity is in a process of transition from indetermination to determination but the indetermination is dependent on determinate data. And an actual entity is a datum for the creative advance. On the physical side, it is composed of determinate feelings of the actual world and on the mental side it originates by the conceptual potentiality. Thus we see that constant interaction between actuality and potentiality is the central theme of the evolutionary process.

So we see that in Whitehead's philosophy, there is a process which means not change but 'passage', i.e., the actual entity which comes into being does not pass into

47. A.N. Whitehead, *op. cit.*, p. 446.
non-being but is superseded by another actual entity. So, "Process is the realising of selected antecedent potentialities, or it is unexplainable." 48 He says also, Fundamental characteristic of nature is its "passage.... or, in other words, its creative advance." 49 It is also called process.

Species of process, are of two types, macroscopic process and microscopic process. "The macroscopic process is the transition from attained actuality to actuality in attainment; while the microscopic process is the conversion of conditions which are merely real into determinate actuality." 50 The actual has a transition to the 'merely real' for the former process and the growth from the real to the actual is possible for the latter process.

It is true that the actual world is a community of actual entities which limit the potentiality of creativeness. In relation to any actual entity, there is a given world of settled actual entities and a real potentiality which is the datum for creativeness. It is the primary phase in the process of constituting an actual entity. It illustrates the metaphysical principle that every being is the potential for becoming.

The universe is an extensive relational whole in which various entities are united by various relationships. It is called the extensive continuum and expresses the solidarity of all possible standpoints throughout the whole process of the world. All actual entities are related according to the determination of continuum. The reality of function is bound up with the reality of continuum.

In Whitehead, we are also familiar with the term 'creativity' which means an urge for novelty, i.e., he uses this term in order to show that the whole universe is driving towards the unlimited production of synthesis. "Creativity", Whitehead says, "is that ultimate principle by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion which is the universe conjunctively." Its urge is of two types: in case of the actual entities of the world, it is from the physical pole to the mental pole and in case of God, this urge is totally opposite.

The Primordial Nature of God and the Consequent Nature of God:

The ingression of eternal objects in the actual entity requires an agent and our curiosity of seeking this agency leads us to the conception of God in Whitehead's philosophy.

51. Ibid., p. 31.
The eternal objects descend into the temporal world of actual entities in two ways viz., "... a concretion in the primordial God by which they shed their abstract character. This concretion is ideal, because the primordial God, though actual, is not temporal. And secondly, there is the actual process of ingression, by which they shed their character as possibilities and become actualities in a temporal order."\(^{52}\)

The eternal ideas would be unable to bring themselves in connection with the world of space and time without the agency of God.

Whitehead presents us a twofold interpretation of the nature of God, i.e., the primordial nature of God and the consequent nature of God. The primordial nature consists of the unconditioned conceptual feelings or it is the one aspect of God which encircles all eternal objects, as Whitehead says, "The actual entity that is needed to order the possibilities is called the primordial nature of God."\(^{53}\)

In the primordial nature, God has a conceptual feeling of the nature of things. The whole universe is present to him as conceptual prehension. But the conceptual prehensions, as they do not give rise to existence, become integrated with objective prehension and as a result of integration the actual entities


\(^{53}\) A.N. Whitehead, Process and Reality, p.100.
originate. The consequent nature of God is what becomes through the development of the actual occasion.

Whitehead never says that God is the creator of the actual occasions; on the other hand, he points out that He guides the process of reality on the basis of conceptual prehensions and through the development of the actual occasions. The completion of the primordial nature of God in the consequent nature means the transformation of conceptual feeling into physical feeling, i.e., unconsciousness into consciousness. God shares with everything in the universe and "The completion of God's nature into a fulness of physical feeling is derived from the objectification of the world in God." 54

Whitehead admits the polar relationship between God and the world. Both are necessary for the completion of both. This polar relationship leads the following antithesis:

"It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many." 55

"It is as true to say that the world is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the World." 56

54. Ibid., p. 523.
55. Ibid., p. 528.
56. Ibid.
Criticism

There is no doubt that A.N. Whitehead's ideas have some resemblance to Sri Aurobindo's thoughts. Whitehead is an outstanding philosopher of evolution among all other philosophers of the East and the West and the principle of evolution in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and that of Whitehead, is not only explaining the world as it is but also what it will be in future. They think that all other principles of the world will remain unexplained without the evolutionary principle which is fundamental in nature. Their evolutionism ends in Monism. Both deny 'dualistic theories' or 'bifurcation theories' and their attitude is forward-looking. From this we must not conclude that there are only similarities between them, on the other hand, there are also important differences.

When we examine the respective views of evolution of both, i.e., Whitehead and Sri Aurobindo, we find a number of differences between them. The theory of evolution is considered by Whitehead from the standpoint of beginning, i.e., his theory of evolution is naturalistic. We know that his philosophy is the philosophy of organism which is based upon the theory of prehension or feeling, a most important force of the process of the world. These feelings possess the power of unifying separate and independent actual entities.
It is a unifying factor which started from the lowest form and reaches out to the aesthetic feelings.

Here lies a difference with Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution which is spiritualistic. His evolution starts from the physical nature, Life, Mind to the Absolute Reality which manifests itself in various objects. Anything which is devoid of Consciousness can never give a proper account of evolution. Whitehead, in his philosophy, has said that the world is a process and ultimate constituents of the world are actual entities which are interdependent in nature. But the events will remain unrecognised, if they are devoid of something enduring in them. Being conscious of such a difficulty, Whitehead introduces 'eternal objects', which are universal and give stability and form to the actual entities, i.e., stability and form are possible due to the ingression of 'eternal objects' into the actual entities. The 'eternal objects' are beyond space and time and are no doubt similar to that of Plato's Ideas. He says also that such ingression is possible through the agency of primordial God.

But Whitehead's theory has some difficulties. His view of 'eternal objects', as outside the space and time and their necessity for the actual entities no doubt raise the following questions: What is the relation between 'eternal objects' and actual entities and how is the connection
possible between them? Any satisfactory answer is impossible, for there is no previous relation between 'eternal objects' and actual entities. Naturally, their relation is external, i.e., there is no inherent necessity for the 'eternal objects' to ingress into the world of events. To avoid this difficulty, Whitehead introduces the agency of primordial God. But in the temporal world primordial God has no actuality and such God is static and unconscious, which Whitehead believes, is also devoid of power of bringing the 'eternal objects' in connection with the world of process.

Whitehead introduces a guiding principle, the principle of creativity, which means an urge for novelty. Whitehead thinks that it gives us a satisfactory explanation of his theory of evolution. The principle of creativity is no doubt an important factor of the process of evolution both at the higher and lower stages and "It is haunted by a dread, the vanishing of the past. But the vanishing of the past, although an evil, is still a necessary evil, for things have an abstractness, and the retention of them all will obstruct the passage of growth." 57

This view ultimately faces the difficulty of subjectivity. Nothing is said about the objective status of the changing world as a result of evolution. Novelty, from the

---

subjective standpoint does not give any satisfactory idea. So the ingression remains a mystery.

But Sri Aurobindo is in a satisfactory position in giving the reason of ingression of Absolute into the world of finite object step by step in order to come back to Itself. The objects which manifest the Absolute possess an inherent necessity of returning to the Absolute from which they originate. Here Sri Aurobindo would not call it a necessity, for the Absolute has no necessity, but it is better to call it 'self-expression'. The evolution is nothing but the projection of Absolute and coming back to Itself. Creation and evolution are the two phases of the Sachchidananda. Here the ascending and descending processes, which we see in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, are totally absent in Whitehead's view.

In Whitehead's philosophy, function of the principle of creativity is to serve a mere urge for novelty but in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy the dynamic element is supplied by the teleological idea of a definite goal and the goal is to return to God. But the individuality is never lost in Him but the status remains the same.

From the very beginning of Whitehead's philosophy, we have seen that he hates all types of dualism but it is surprising that he himself admits two Gods (1) the primordial God which is "... viewed as primordial, he is the
The unlimited conceptual realisation of the absolute wealth of potentiality.\textsuperscript{58} He speaks also of another God (2) the consequence: God. This means that for primordial God we have realised all the possibilities which are represented by the eternal objects, and this realisation is the basis of actual realisation in the world process. Primordial God gives concreteness to the abstract ideas for which He comes down into the world of events. But from this we must not conclude that this God is the creator of everything,\textsuperscript{62} on the other hand, Whitehead states, "... he is not before all creation but with all creation,"\textsuperscript{59}, and saves the world, so He is ideal. Whitehead repudiated the idea of Substance and accepts that Process itself is the ultimate reality. Naturally, there is no necessity of assuming an Ultimate Reality.

But the question still remains: What converts the possibility into actuality? We should examine whether conceptual God can solve the problem. The conceptual God is that where all the potentialities have been actualised, i.e., He is the actualised God that is confronted with the world which gives only the possibility to be actualised. The world and God are opposite in nature and also both move conversely. "Thus when the world is actualised, God is fluent, and when the world is fluent, God supplies the


\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
permanent element.' 60 So one comes to help the other.

The primordial God, is recognised by him as the ideal
locus of eternal ideas. There is also the consequent God,
i.e., evolving God, which bears a reciprocal relationship
with the world. Due to it both act and react upon each other.
Here consequent God is the dancing partner of the world and
both dance in a perfect rhythm and hold each other. If we
find such a relation between God and the world then a ques-
tion may arise in our mind, how can God save the world? 61

The only way to avoid the above mentioned difficulty
is to understand the true nature of Reality. Reality is not
within any limitation, on the other hand, as Sri Aurobindo
says, the Absolute expresses itself through stability and
movement yet it is beyond them. The evolution is due to the
dance of God alone, not due to the joint dance of God and
the world as Whitehead thinks. Whitehead says that God and
the world evolve together and God saves the world. But it
is wrong because if He Himself evolves how can he save the
world for He is not the creator of the world. 62

But such difficulty in Whitehead's view arises due to
his one sided importance on evolution and we do not find
any reference to creation of the world. The world is an

61. Ibid., p. 86.
62. Ibid.
which human beings strive.

Our criticisms of Whitehead's philosophy reflect the deficiencies that are deeply inherent in his philosophy. Whitehead wanted to establish a compact philosophy but his efforts ultimately ended in smoke. In his philosophy there is no goal. Actually his philosophy is in mid-air.

The only value of his philosophy lies in his thoroughness, on the basis of which he has developed his philosophy. But Sri Aurobindo is in a more satisfactory position. He gives us a comprehensive philosophy, where we have a systematic explanation of evolution and creation, a perfect harmony between permanence and change without any reference to special device. His philosophy gives us an assurance that it is possible for us to have Divine life on this earth.