CHAPTER - II

EPISTEMOLOGY
Radhakrishnan believes that intuition is the source of philosophical and religious insight. Further the source and goal of both philosophy and religion are integral experience or integrated life. The entire system of Radhakrishnan is based on the ideal of integration within the self, and the integration of the self with the Universal Self or Ātman. Throughout his writings Radhakrishnan has tried to show that the wisest course for Indian thinkers is to synthesize the best of the Indian and western traditions. His writings may be said to be the most intelligible introduction to Indian philosophy, especially to the Upanishads, the Brahma-Sūtra and Śaṅkara, the three key elements in Vedānta, the dominant school in Indian philosophy.

At the beginning of the discussion of the epistemological outlook of Radhakrishnan, it may be admitted that his epistemology (primarily his theory of intuition) and his metaphysics (primarily his theory of Brahma-Ātman) are mutually dependent. J.G. Arapura, too, in his "Radhakrishnan and Integral Experience" holds that in Radhakrishnan's system epistemology and metaphysics implying each other. Radhakrishnan's case of intuition presupposes the reality of the
Absolute or Brahman, the intuition of which is the source and object of all knowledge. Similarly, the metaphysical claims for Brahman and the levels of reality which it includes, presuppose that the great religious personalities, whose insights are expressed in the Upanishads, have overcome maya or the appearance of reality and have achieved the spiritual realization in which all is Brahman. According to Radhakrishnan, recognition of intuitive experience characterizes Indian in contrast to Western philosophy.

"Knowledge" according to Radhakrishnan, "presupposes unity or oneness of thought and being, a unity that transcends the differentiation of subject and object. Such knowledge is revealed in man's very existence. It is unveiled rather than acquired. Knowledge is concealed in ignorance and when the latter is removed the former manifests itself." For him self-knowledge is inseparable from self-existence and it is the only true direct knowledge. The rest are only inferential. The self is implicit in all awareness, in all the three experiences, cognition, conation, and emotion. "It is the persistent recognition and retention possible".

In "An Idealist View of Life" Radhakrishnan discusses the eastern and western views on intellect and intuition. According to the Hindu thinkers, we possess a power more interior than intellect by which we become aware of the real in its intimate individuality, and not merely in its superficial or discernible aspects. Knowledge means power. The lack of this knowledge is the root of all troubles. Intuitive realization is the means of
salvation. It is the faith of the Indian thinkers that he who knows
is saved directly and immediately and by means of that knowledge.
Radhakrishnan states that unlike Eastern thought "The Western
systems are generally characterised by a greater adherence to
critical intelligence". But for Radhakrishnan, this distinction
between Eastern and Western thought is relative only and not
absolute. Because, for Plato, says Radhakrishnan, noesis is the
highest kind of knowledge which is immediate and supra-
intellectual. Aristotle too speaks of the absolute self-knowledge
of God. Plotinus and Neo-Plotinus were also convinced that
logical knowledge alone was inadequate. But the post-scholastic
philosophers fell back upon a purely rationalistic approach to
certainty and the attempt to ground philosophy in science became
more popular with the growth of natural sciences, which were
actually engaged in pushing back the frontiers of knowledge
through observation and experimental verification.

There are three ways of knowing the real according
to Radhakrishnan - sense experience, discursive reasoning and
intuitive apprehension. In the Upanishads too, three modes of
consciousness are recognised - sense perception, logical insight
and intuitive insight. (As expressed by Radhakrishnan in "The
Brahman-Sūtra"). Here Radhakrishnan's view is similar to the
Upanishadic view. Through sense experience, the outer characters
of the external world are known. By means of it an acquaintance
with the sensible qualities of the objects is known.

Logical knowledge is obtained by the process of analysis
and synthesis. The data supplied to us by perception are
analysed and the results of the analysis give a more systematic knowledge of the objects perceived. This logical or conceptual knowledge is indirect and symbolic in its character. This analytical intellect "cannot give us a full understanding to the ecstasy or love or the beauty of holiness". Radhakrishnan holds that both sense-knowledge and logical knowledge are the means by which we acquire for practical purposes a control over our environment. But both these kinds of knowledge are recognised as inadequate to the real which they attempt to apprehend.

The inadequacy of logical knowledge or intellect is also stressed by Plato, Bradley and Bergson. Plato contrasts the world of eternal forms with the transitory forms of sense-impressions. The former is real and the latter unreal. Knowledge is of the former, while the latter belongs to the realm of opinion. Bradley and Bergson too insist on the symbolic character of logical knowledge. They are of the opinion that whatever be the object, physical or non-physical, intellect goes about it and about, but does not take us to the heart of it. Bergson holds that intellect finds it easy to distinguish and separate, but when it synthesizes, we get a patchwork and not a harmony.

The insufficiency of reason or intellect is expressed by Radhakrishnan in the following way: "To the concrete life of experience our intellects are quite inadequate. Nay, they are made for each other, practically the parallel manifestations of one process. If Samkara regards intellect as not the highest mode of man's consciousness; it is because the completed world of
intellect still leaves us with a riddle. The completed world of logic is not the complete world of life and experience."

Radhakrishnan holds that there is a knowledge which is different from the conceptual, a knowledge by which we see things as they are. It is non-sensous, immediate knowledge. It is intuitive knowledge. At the intellectual level, we grope with an external vision of things where objects are extrinsically opposed to one another. We are besieged by error and incapacity. But intuitive knowledge presupposes its object truly and securely. "Nothing is external to it. Nothing is other than itself. Nothing is divided or in conflict within its all comprehensive self-awareness. It is the means of knowledge and knowledge itself". This intuitive knowledge arises from an intimate fusion of mind with reality. It is knowing by being and not by senses or by symbols. It is awareness of the truths of things by identity. Here we become one with the object of knowledge. The object known is seen not as an object outside the self, but as a part of the self. It is a state of mind and not a definition of the object. Logic and language are a lower form of this kind of knowledge. Thought is a means of partially manifesting and presenting what is concealed in this greater self-existent knowledge. Knowledge is an intense and close communion between the knower and the known. In logical knowledge, there is always the duality, the distinction between the knowledge of a thing and its being. Thought is able to reveal reality, because they are one in essence. But they are different in existence at the empirical level.
Knowing a thing and being it are different. So thought needs verification.

Intuition, according to Radhakrishnan, is the spiritual realization. It is the immediate and innermost realization of the soul. It is a realized principle. It is not merely an assumption. It is not a hypothesis too. For him there are aspects of reality where only this kind of knowledge is efficient. The emotion of anger may be taken for example. Neither sense-knowledge nor intellectual knowledge of it is possible. We know what it is to be angry by being angry. Similarly no one can understand fully the force of human love or parental affection who has not himself been through them.

The great illustration of intuitive knowledge given by Hindu thinkers is the knowledge of self. It seems to be the only true and direct knowledge. This self-knowledge, according to Śaṅkara, is the presupposition of every other kind of knowledge. There is no real but only a logical distinction between subject and object in the immediate intuitive awareness of the self or real being. The knower and the known are really the same thing according to Śaṅkara. Radhakrishnan holds that many Western thinkers confirm this view of Śaṅkara. The scepticism of Descartes reaches its limits and breaks against the intuitive certainty of self-consciousness: Cogito Ergo Sum. Even Locke, who vigorously criticized innate ideas, consider the reality of intuition. In Kant "I Think" accompanies all representations. All knowledge starts with the first principle of self certainty. For Bergson, the true self is to be defined by reference to pure
duration which knows not past history or future progress. We can intuit pure duration only if we make ourselves into it. According to Bergson, "Intellect working with distinction of the knower, the knowledge and the known cannot attain to self-knowledge where these three are not different. Intellect ignores the fundamental oneness of the movement which is indivisible and not distributed in its forms. Intuitive self-knowledge knows itself as a single indivisible act of knowledge, an act which is one with its self-existence."  

The deepest things of life are known only through intuitive apprehension. We recognise their truth but we do not reason about them. For Radhakrishnan, in the sphere of value too we depend on intuition. Both recognition and creation of values are due to intuitive thinking.

Moreover, Radhakrishnan holds that the things we normally notice through the senses or infer through the intellect can also be known by intuition. Objects can be seen without the medium of the senses and relations can be discerned spontaneously without building them up labouriously. In normal circumstances we are incapable of knowing the things going on in another's mind except through the expressions of that mind through speech or gestures. But the facts of telepathy prove that one mind can communicate with another directly. From Radhakrishnan's descriptions of sense experience, intellect and intuition, what we can infer is that he places sense experience at a lower level of consciousness, intellect higher to it and intuition at the highest level of consciousness.
According to Radhakrishnan, intuition is different from mere imagination. The element of reality is there in intuition which is lacking in imagination. For him intuition "is not fancy or make-believe but a bona-fide discovery of reality."^14

Intuitive knowing is immediate as distinct from the discursive and mediate knowledge. It is more immediate than sensory intuition, for it overcomes the distinction between the knower and the known which subsists in sense-intuition. It is the perfect knowledge, while all other knowledge is incomplete and imperfect. The only generally effective knowledge is that which penetrates into the very nature of things. Intuitive knowledge is proved on our pulses. It is the only kind of absolute knowledge, "Intuition is the ultimate vision of our profoundest being".15

Radhakrishnan holds that intellect is useful for action. It is the toolmaking faculty by means of which life fashions inanimate matter into instruments for the extension of its own powers. But if we wish to know the inner nature of reality, we must resort to the whole personality of which intellect is only a part. Thought is useful, but not true. But intuition is true though not useful. Intellectual consciousness is practical. Radhakrishnan says, "When a man points a pistol at me, I donot care to ascertain the colour and make, but simply react to it by running away from it. Its dangerous character alone is of practical interest to me; all else is irrelevant."16

Intellectual knowledge does not have the flavour of immediate experience, however much they may enable one to predict. A physicist may know the law of electricity though he
is ignorant of what electricity is in itself. His knowledge of electricity is indirect and grows from more to more. But intuitive knowledge which is direct is incapable of growth, for it is individual and therefore incommunicable. Intuitive knowledge transcends the partial truth of the divided mind, the intellectual or the sensuous.

For intellect to know a thing is to know its relation. A thing is known as definite relation to other object through reason. Intellectual knowledge is verified and developed through progressive enquiry. If we want to know reality, we must transcend discursive thinking. Intuition is direct and immediate perception. To quote Radhakrishnan, "Direct perception or simple and steady looking upon an object is intuition. It is not a mystic process, but the most direct and penetrating examination possible to the human mind." 17

According to Radhakrishnan, certainty and not communicability is the truest test of knowledge. As intuitive experience has this sense of assurance or certainty, it is a species of knowledge.

If all our knowledge were of an intuitive character, there would be no need for logical tests. The unity between the knower and the known would be perfect and knowledge would be complete. This knowledge is neither superficial, nor symbolic nor second-hand. In it there is no reference to external objects, no correspondence of an idea with something other than itself. Knowledge and being, the idea and the reality, the reference and
the identification are both there. It does not stand in need of proof. It is existence aware of itself.

Radhakrishnan says that Vidyā and Avidyā are two ways of apprehending reality. Both are forms of relative knowledge and belong to the manifested universe. Vidyā stresses the harmony and interconnections of elements which make up the world. Avidyā, on the other hand, stresses the separateness, mutual independence and strife. Vidyā helps us to appreciate intellectually the intelligible ideas about the nature of the Divine ground, and the nature of the direct experience of it in relation to other experiences. It indicates the means by which we can attain Brahman. Logical knowledge, according to Radhakrishnan, is non-knowledge, "avidyā, valid only till intuition arises". Radhakrishnan seems to regard intuitive knowledge as vidyā when he says "If intuitive knowledge is knowledge by coincidence or identity, the possession of the intuitive knowledge of reality means that it is possible for us to coincide or be one with reality."20

Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that "spiritual apprehension or the kind of awareness of real values which are neither objects in space and time nor universals of thought is called intuition."21 For him only the spirit in us can raise us to the spiritual status.22 The Real, which is the basis of this manifold world of things and minds can be apprehended directly and immediately only by those who fulfill certain conditions and submit to the leadings of the spirit. Even as the conclusions of common sense are corrected by those of scientific understanding,
the conclusions of the latter require to be corrected by the light
of the spirit in us. The abstractions of the intellect require to be
converted into the actuality of spiritual experience and the
concrete vision of the soul. But "to be spiritual is not to reject
reason but to go beyond it. It is to think so hard that thinking
becomes knowing or viewing, what we might call creative
thinking."\textsuperscript{23}

The potentialities of spirit can be realized only by a process
of moral ascesis which gradually shapes the soul into harmony
with the invisible realities. That is why Radhakrishnan says,
"Intuition is not only perfect knowledge but also perfect living.
The consecration of the self and the knowledge of reality
grow together. The fully real can be known only by one who is
himself fully real."\textsuperscript{24}

Radhakrishnan was influenced by Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore has proved the true artistic nature of intuitive realization
and proved that intuition is something more than intellect. But
it does not mean that intuition goes against intellect, but has
agreement with intellect. Intuition is the sole position of man.

Radhakrishnan's view on intuition seems to be similar to
that of Bergson's view. Like Bergson he holds that intuition is
to be understood as indicating a higher immediacy which
supervenes on intellectual analysis. Again Radhakrishnan seems
to be different from Hegel in certain respects. Hegel is of the
opinion that we can have a true knowledge of reality from the
dialectical development of concepts. Now, Radhakrishnan holds
that if reality is a genuine becoming and not a mere repetition, than its apprehension cannot be merely dilectical. For him, "The truest account of reality which is of the nature of life, a concrete becoming or a growth, partakes of the character of a historical narrative rather than dilectical development." That which reduces real growth to a logical scheme is pseudo-history. If the real is a genuine becoming, then knowledge can only become an insight. Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that philosophy as conceptual knowing is a preparation for intuitive insight, and an exposition of it when it arises.

Though intuition lies beyond intellect, it is not contrary to it. Intuition which ignores intellect is useless. The two are not only compatible but also united. Intuition is called śamyagjñāna or perfect knowledge. Both intellectual and intuitive kinds of knowledge are justified and have their own rights. Each is useful for its own specific purposes. Intuition stands to intellect in somewhat the same relation as intellect stands to sense. Both intellect and intuition belong to the self, while the former involves a specialized part, the latter employs the whole self. Their activities are interdependent.

Intuitive knowledge is not non-rational; it is only non-conceptual. We have throughout life the intuitive and the intellectual sides at work. Even in pure mathematics where the conclusion is not evident until the data are brought together and set forth in logical sequence, there is an element of intuition. Intuition gives us an idea of the whole and intellect analysis of part. Intuition "stands to intellect as a whole to a part, as the
creative source of thought to the created categories which work more or less automatically." The union of apparent opposites which intellect effects is itself inspired by the drive of intuition. Every intuition has an intellectual content and by making it more intellectual we deepen the content. Thus in Radhakrishnan's epistemology, intellect has not been discarded "but has been so thoroughly subordinated to intuition that it is preserved as a function of intuition." 

Radhakrishnan holds that intuition comes in a flash, we can neither force it nor prepare for it. Since the distinction between subject and object disappears in intuition, it reveals the central feature of the object. Thus intuition is creativity. "Intuition, as revealing the whole spirit, is regarded by Radhakrishnan as the integral whole, into which all the aspects of mind properly cultivated will develop, and will also be merged." 

All intuitions are involved in self-knowledge. All growth in knowledge is an elaboration of this self-knowledge which is an assimilation of the mind of man to the spirit in him. All experience issues forth from it and rests in it. For Radhakrishnan, if we deny self-knowledge, we deny possibility of all knowledge and life. If all knowledge depends for its validity on external criteria, then no knowledge is valid at all. In such a situation, one thing depends on another, and we slide into infinite regress. In order to escape from it we must assume knowledge which is valid in itself. And Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that self-knowledge is self-valid knowledge.
Error, according to Radhakrishnan is non-thought. We do not think it. It is due to the passions and interests of man which cloud our thought. Our logical knowledge is a mixture of truth and error, for practical motives interfere with the unclouded thought. It is only when the mind is set free and casts away all desire and anxiety, all interest and regret, it can enter the world of pure being and reveal it. For him, the ultimate, dependable and self-evident knowledge of reality is achieved by adopting certain processes. These processes include aspiring for super normal experiences, deepening an imaginative power, sharpening our wits and wielding the various faculties and potentialities of our personality into an integral unity. True knowledge is an integral creative activity of the spirit which does not know anything external at all. For it, everything is its own life. Here there is identity, possession, absorption of the object at the deepest level. Truth in spiritual life is neither the reflection nor the expression of any other reality. It is reality itself. Those who know the truth become the truth. It is not a question of having an idea or a perception of the real. It is just the revelation of the real. It is the illumination of being and of life itself. Radhakrishnan writes, “Knowledge and being are the same thing, inseperable aspects of a single reality, being no longer even distinguishable in that sphere where all is without duality.”

As Radhakrishnan’s epistemology aims at the realization of Ultimate Reality, it may be said to be integral experience. Advaita Vedānta is the most significant classical philosophical system in India that is concerned with the same.
Radhakrishnan's integral experience may be regarded as a new interpretation of Advaita Vedānta. In his philosophy self-evident knowledge of reality is sought for the purpose of attaining spiritual wisdom. This is the ultimate aim of anyone seriously desirous of saving himself. This saving wisdom is intuitive. It is bereft of multiplicity and highly metaphysical. Therefore, there comes in the search of wisdom a point where epistemology and metaphysics get merged. This is the only way how the crippling scepticism of reason and logic can be transcended.

SRI AUROBINDO:

The epistemology of Sri Aurobindo is based on the ancient vedāntic theory of knowledge and also the vedantic conception of reality. He tries to rebuild the vedāntic theory of knowledge in new light and with new expressions suited to later mentality. In the Upanishads and the Gītā the five outer indriyas (senses), manas (lower mind) and buddhi (intellect or higher mind) are described as the organs of human knowledge. The Ātman or Purusha is placed above these. Sri Aurobindo starts his philosophy with the three kinds of instruments of knowledge, viz., the five outer senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste, the sense mind and reason.

According to Sri Aurobindo, to arrive at the knowledge of a divine existence by exceeding the evidence of the senses,
reason is the first instrument. "To correct the errors of the sense mind by the use of reason is one of the most valuable powers developed by man and the chief cause of his superiority among terrestrial beings." Unlike the Indian philosophers who regard sense-mind (manas) as the sixth sense, Sri Aurobindo holds that this sense-mind can be said to be the only sense and five outer senses of vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste are merely specialization of the sense-mind. For him, though sense-mind normally uses the sense organs as the basis of its experiences, yet it exceeds them and is capable of a direct experience.

Reason has two functions, mixed and pure. In its mixed activity, it takes from sense experience the data about the phenomenal world and then interprets them, interrelates them, draws different kinds of inferences from them. This is how reason works in the sciences dealing with the phenomenal world. In its purest aspect taking sense experience as the starting point, it goes behind and strives to arrive at general and unalterable concepts which attach themselves to that which stands behind the appearances of things. For him, "The complete use of pure reason brings us finally from physical to metaphysical knowledge."

Knowledge, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the same as Brahman, the one, the eternal, the infinite and harmonious. The integral knowledge is already there in the integral Reality. It is not a new or still non-existent thing that has to be created or acquired by the mind. It must rather be discovered or uncovered. It is the truth which is veiled there in our deeper and greater self. It is self-revealed to a spiritual endeavour. It is the very
stuff of our own spiritual consciousness, and it is by waking to it even in our surface self that have to possess it. He writes, "...... the real knowledge is that which is a secret to the mind, of which the mind only gets reflections, but which lives in the spirit." 34

Sri Aurobindo holds that knowledge is the foundation of a constant living in the Divine. "The Divine meets us in many aspects and to each of them knowledge is the key, so that by knowledge we enter into and possess the infinite and Divine in every way of his being, Satyabhāvena, and receive him into us and are possessed by him in every way of ours." 35

The path of knowledge aims at realization of the unique and Supreme Self. This means the realization of the Supreme Self not only in one's own being but in all beings and, finally, the realization of even the phenomenal aspects of the world as a play of the divine consciousness. And on the basis of this realization, the conversion of all forms of knowledge into the activities of the divine consciousness becomes possible. Sri Aurobindo expects "Such a method might well lead to the elevation of the whole range of human intellect and perception to the divine level, to its spiritualization and to the justification of the cosmic travail of knowledge in humanity." 46

Sri Aurobindo is of the opinion that though the concepts of metaphysics satisfy pure reason, they do not fully satisfy the demand of our integral being. Ideas are mere promises of possible immediate experience. The promises must be fulfilled. Ideas about sensous objects, e.g., the inner contents of a box, formed
by reason through inference are not fully accepted until they are verified by perception. "The reason cannot arrive at any final truth because it can neither get to the root of things nor embrace the totality of their secrets; it deals with the finite, the separate, the limited aggregate and has no measure for the all and the infinite." The non-sensous ideas about ultimate reality formed by reason are not fully accepted without some immediate but non-sensous experience. This immediate but non-sensous experience is intuition.

In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy it is found that the creation of a finite world out of the Infinite Consciousness requires an intermediate principle, a principle of selective knowledge which alone can fashion finite appearance of the infinite reality. This intermediate selective principle of knowledge is not mind, because mind distorts Reality by arbitrary division. It must be a selective principle of knowledge which remains the real truth of existence. In other words it must be a Supreme Truth-Consciousness. To this Supreme Truth-Consciousness Sri Aurobindo has given the name Supermind. It is the link between Sachchidānanda, the Infinite Consciousness, and the finite world. The Supermind is all that the mind strives to be but cannot attain. Mental knowledge undoubtedly fails to grasp the nature of the Absolute. "Mind cannot process the infinite, it can only suffer or be possessed by it; it can only lie blissfully helpless under the luminous shadow of the Real, cast down on it from planes of existence beyond its reach."
Thus, it is seen that there is a vast gulf between Mind and Supermind, and consequently it is necessary to seek an intermediary between them. Now the question arises whether intuition can be regarded as an intermediary between them. Sri Aurobindo looks upon intuition as a communication to the mind from above. He says, "Intuition brings to man those brilliant messages from the Unknown which are the beginning of his higher knowledge." Moreover he calls it "a projection of the characteristic action of these higher grades (i.e. higher grades of consciousness) into the mind of ignorance". Commenting on Sri Aurobindo's conception of intuition M.P. Pandit says, "In fact intuition is knowledge in movement, it is a light that puts out the shadow of ignorance. Man has to open his doors to this sentinal of Truth."

But this intuition is not the highest form of consciousness. For in human mind its action is largely hidden by the interventions of our normal intelligence; a pure intuition is a rare occurrence in our mental activity. For him "Intuition itself is limited in the human mind by mental imprison by its intimations and is unable to act in its own right; for what it be physical, vital and mental intuition, it has to present itself in order to be received, not nude and pure, but garbed with a mental coating or entirely enveloped in an ample mental vesture; so disguised, its true nature cannot be recognised and its relation to mind and its office are not understood, its way of working is ignored by the hasty and half-aware human intelligence." Very often, the flash of intuition is quickly replaced or interpreted
by a rapid imitative mental movement or insight or quick perception. Now, as human intuition is always more or less under the influence and control of mind, it can never be the same as the pure truth consciousness or supramental consciousness. If it were possible for us to have an intuition completely free from all mental action, then we could have the ultimate truths revealed through it. In fact, Sri Aurobindo calls such an intuition the "Supreme Intuition".

Thus, according to Sri Aurobindo as intuition is overlaid with mental stuff and its flow is frequently interrupted by imitative mental movement, it is not in a position to give us that integral experience which alone reveals the ultimate truth. But then it is followed by Reason, for at the level of mind in which we are, Reason alone can organise and articulate our experience. Thus the lower faculty gets an opportunity of assimilating as much as it can of what the higher has left and thereby transforming itself and preparing itself for the reception for the higher truths.

The reason active in our waking consciousness is only the mediator between the subconscient All that we can come from in our evolution upward and the superconscient All towards which we are impelled by that evolution. Intuitional knowledge, on the otherhand, is common between them and the foundation of intuitional knowledge is conscious or effective identity between the knower and the known. It is "that state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge."43 But in the subconscient the intuition manifests
itself in the action, and the knowledge or conscious identity is either entirely or more or less concealed in the action. In the super-conscient, on the contrary, the intuition manifests itself in its true nature as knowledge emerging out of conscious identity, and effectivity of action is rather the necessary consequent and no longer mask as the primary fact. Between these two states reason and mind act as intermediaries which enable the being to liberate knowledge out of its imprisonment in the act and prepare it to resume its essential primacy. When the self-awareness in the mind applied, both to own self and other self, exalts itself into the luminous self-manifest identity. Then the reason also converts itself into the form of the self-luminous intuitional knowledge. This is the highest possible state of our knowledge when the mind fulfills itself in the supramental.

Sri Aurobindo holds that the highest intuitive knowledge sees things in the whole and in the large and it sees details only as sides of indivisible whole. Its tendency is towards immediate synthesis and unity of knowledge. Reason, on the other hand, proceeds by analysis and division and assembles its facts to form a whole. But in the assemblance so formed, there are opposites and anomalies and the natural tendency of Reason is to affirm some and to negate others which conflict with its chosen conclusions so that it may form a flawlessly logical system.44

Our reason cannot grasp the truth of the Infinite. It has no means of direct awareness. Sri Aurobindo distinguishes between intuition and intellect in the following way - "intuition is born of a direct awareness while intellect is an indirect action of a
knowledge which constructs itself with difficulty out of the unknown from signs and indications and gathered data."  

Knowledge, according to Sri Aurobindo, is not only a mental process but a matter of whole being. An integral spiritual consciousness carries in it a knowledge of all the terms of being. The physical, the vital, the mental and finally the psychical all equally take part in the achievement of knowledge. In integral knowledge there are three steps of self-achievement. The first is the discovery of the secret psychic entity. The next step is to realise the eternal self in all beings. The third step is to know the Divine Being, who is our Supreme transcendent self, the cosmic Being, foundation of our universality and the Divinity within.

Sri Aurobindo has distinguished five levels of consciousness above the mental, viz., the Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Overmind and Supermind. Each of these with the exception of the first, is in a position to give us intuitions, but the value of these intuitions differ very considerably from one another. Those that emanate from Illumined Mind and Intuitive Mind are full of mental stuff and therefore their value cannot be regarded as very great. Even those that emanate from the Overmind have got certain limitations. For example, they may enable us to comprehend the whole universe under one aspect, but fail to give us any knowledge of it under any other aspect. It is only the descent of the Supermind which makes possible the achievement of a complete integral knowledge of nature.
Intuition, according to Sri Aurobindo, is a revelation to us of a truth which is not ordinarily accessible to the mind. But it itself has its source in something higher "a superconscient cosmic Mind in direct contact with the Supramental Truth Consciousness." This Superconscient cosmic Mind which is called the Overmind, is the link between Mind and Supermind. Sri Aurobindo holds that although the Supermind communicates all its realities to the Overmind, yet the latter is "a first parent of Ignorance" because it lacks the integrality of the Supermind.

There are four methods of cognition in nature which show how intuition changes gradually to separative knowledge. These methods are knowledge by identity, knowledge by intimate direct contact, knowledge by separative direct contact and a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact. We get the knowledge of essential existence by direct awareness or knowledge by identity. Knowledge by awareness of the subjective state of mind is obtained by "intimate direct contact", when the surface mind partially steps back to the aware of a part of itself. Here the mind is not completely identified with the object of knowledge. We get the knowledge of our body and its movement by a 'separative direct contact'. Mind is separate from our body, but still feel the body and its movements as part of ourselves. Finally, when we observe external objects through the senses, we have a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact. Here the surface mind gets the knowledge of the external world. This is the characteristic nature of ignorance. Thus ignorance is a poise
of the Consciousness-Force. There is a limited, practical, self-oblivious exclusive concentration at the root of ignorance. This is further heightened by man by his habit of exclusively living in the present forgetful of the past as well as future. This existence in the moment is only a pragmatic truth, a half-true, half-false knowledge, an ignorance, since what he forgets is contained in the all retaining integral consciousness within man. "The ignorance" says Sri Aurobindo, "cannot have the origin of its existence or the starting point of its dividing activities in the absolute Brahman or in the integral Sachchidānanda; it belongs only to a partial action of the being with which we identify ourselves, just as in the body we identify ourselves with that partial and superficial consciousness which alternates between sleep and waking; it is indeed this identification putting aside all the rest of the Reality behind us that it is the constituting cause of the ignorance." 49

Ignorance, according to Sri Aurobindo, is valid in its own sphere, but must be gradually eliminated by knowledge. Ignorance is the power of knowledge and behind ignorance, knowledge is involved. Concentration of the mind on a particular subject or action exclusive of all the other subjects or action results in ignorance. This concentration is the power of the mind or consciousness. Thus ignorance is a power of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo shows that if we look upon knowledge and ignorance as fundamentally opposed to each other, then these would result no unitary conception of Reality, but rather Reality would be divided hopelessly of its source. and we should have to admit
that the ultimate nature of ignorance is an unfathomable mystery. In order to escape from this position, ignorance is to be taken as knowledge and it is to be viewed as capable of evolving into knowledge. For him "if we find that knowledge and ignorance are light and shadow of the same consciousness, that the beginning of ignorance is a limitation of knowledge, that it is the limitation that opens the door to a subordinate possibility of partial illusion and error, that this possibility takes full body after a purposeful plunge of knowledge into a material Inconscience but that knowledge too emerges along with an emerging consciousness out of the inconscience, then we can be sure that this fullness of Ignorance is by its own evolution changing back into a limited knowledge and can feel the assurance that the limitation itself will be removed and the full truth of things become apparent, the cosmic truth frees itself from the cosmic ignorance." 50

Ignorance is not a power of the Supreme Being nor does it dwells in Him. There cannot be any primeval Ignorance. The Supreme Being or the Absolute, says Sri Aurobindo, is not only Chit or Consciousness but also Shakti or Power. Chit itself is also Shakti. This may be called Tapas using the Vedic sense of a conscious force acting upon itself or upon its object. Now, ignorance must be sought in some self-absorbed concentration of Tapas, of Conscious-Force in action on a separate movement of the Force; to us this takes the appearance of mind identifying itself with the separate movement and identifying itself seperately with each of the forms resulting from it. The result of this self-absorption of Tapas is that it builds a wall of
separation which shuts out the consciousness in each form from awareness of its own total self, of other embodied consciousness and of universal being. This self absorption cannot be the action of the whole being, for the character of that action is whole knowledge. It must therefore be a partial movement absorbed in a superficial or partial action of consciousness which makes it oblivious of everything that is not included in its formation. Thus ignorance, according to Sri Aurobindo, is Nature's purposeful oblivion of the self and the All, leaving them aside, putting them behind herself in order to do solely what she has to do in some outer play of existence.  

Man, says Sri Aurobindo, by nature is not ignorant. He has in him the power and potency of complete knowledge. It is only because of pragmatic reasons of the present moment, that there is erected a wall which shut him out completely from all knowledge of the future and also from all knowledge of the past. Therefore, ignorance does not create any dualism. It is not something opposed to knowledge, not something which contradicts knowledge. It is simply a power of knowledge itself.

The reality of both the individual and the cosmos is Brahman, the Absolute. The individual is a phenomenon, a temporal appearance in the cosmos. The cosmos too, is a phenomena, a larger and more complex temporal appearance. Now knowledge and ignorance donot belong to the Absolute reality but to the appearance. In order to reach the Absolute, these two phenomena will have to be transcended.
Ignorance is seven-fold according to Sri Aurobindo. We are ignorant of the Absolute, which is the source of all being and becoming. We take the partial facts of being and temporal relations of the becoming for the whole truth of existence. This is the first -- the original ignorance. We are ignorant of the spaceless, timeless, immobile and immutable Self. We take the constant mobility and mutation of the cosmic becoming in Time and Space for the whole truth of existence. This is the second -- the cosmic ignorance. We are ignorant of our universal self, our infinite unity with all being and becoming. We take our limited egoistic mentality, vitality, corporeality for our true self and regard everything other than as not self. This is the third -- the egoistic ignorance. We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time. We take this little life in a small span of Time, in a petty field of Space, for our beginning, our middle and our end. That is the fourth -- the temporal ignorance. We are ignorant of our large and complex being, of that in us which is superconscient, intraconscient, circumconscient to our surface becoming. We take that surface becoming with its small selection of overtly metalised experiences for our whole existence. This is the fifth -- the psychological ignorance. We are ignorant of the constitution of our becoming. We take the mind or life or body or any two of these or all three for our true principle losing right of them which constitutes them. This is the sixth -- the constitutional ignorance. As a result of these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and
enjoyment of our life in the world. This ignorance is responsible for our entire error, evil, falsehood and pain in this world. It leads to all types of frictions between individuals societies. This is the seventh -- the practical ignorance.

In order to obtain integral knowledge, we must get rid of these seven-fold ignorance by the discovery of a seven-fold self-revelation within our consciousness. This seven-fold knowledge includes the knowledge of the Absolute as the origin of all things; the knowledge of the Self, the Being and of the cosmos as the Self's becoming; the knowledge of the world as one with us; the knowledge of our psychic entity and its immortal persistence in Time beyond death and earth existence; the knowledge of our greater and inner existence behind the surface; the knowledge of our mind, life and body in its true relation to the self within and the super-conscious spiritual and supramental being above them; and finally the knowledge of the true harmony and true use of our thought, will and action and a change of all our nature into a conscious expression of the truth of the Spirit, the integral, spiritual Reality.

Thus Sri Aurobindo holds that in the process of evolution, the spiritual principle has to emerge in man by dispelling seven-fold ignorance and by the discovery of seven-fold knowledge. For him the turning of the mind's eye inwards is the first indispensable means of attaining knowledge. The mind, the heart, the will all must seek to know and unite with the Divine who dwells in us. But the plunge is not possible so long as our being is unpurified. Purification is of the utmost importance as a
preliminary to the inner plunge. "The greater the growth of purity in the being, the greater the steadfastness in concentration". Concentration, which is an affair of mental consciousness in the path of knowledge, becomes an organic and harmonic gravitation of the whole human being towards the Divine, and culminates in a settled dynamic poise in him. This integral knowledge necessarily leads to integration and transformation of the entire nature into the truth of spirit.

COMPARISON:

An analysis of the views of Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo reveals that both of them base their epistemology on the ancient Vedāntic theory of knowledge and also on the Vedāntic conception of Reality. They tried to rebuild Vedāntic theory of knowledge in the light of the modern world. They tried to synthesize the tradition of both the East and the West. The epistemology and metaphysics of these two philosophers are mutually dependent. For them Brahman is the ultimate Reality and the achievement of the knowledge of Brahman is the aim of human beings. The systems of these two philosophers are based on the integration within the self and integration of the self with the universal self. Though the root of the epistemological outlook of these two philosophers is the same and there are some
similarities between their views, yet there are major differences too.

Our study shows that both Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo maintain that knowledge is not a new or still non-existent thing that has to be created or acquired by the mind. It must rather be unveiled, discovered or uncovered. Such knowledge is revealed in man's very existence. Following the footsteps of the ancient Indian philosophers, these two philosophers hold that knowledge is concealed in ignorance and when the latter is removed, knowledge reveals itself. Both Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo are of the opinion that the path of knowledge aims at the realization of the Supreme Self in all beings. But Sri Aurobindo goes a step further and holds that this aim of knowledge should not only be the realization of the Supreme Self in all beings but also the realization of the phenomenal aspects of the world as a play of the Divine consciousness.

Following the Upanishads, Radhakrishnan recognises three sources of knowledge, viz., sense-experience, intellect and intuition. Sri Aurobindo too starts his philosophy with the three sources of knowledge, viz., five outer sense organs, sense-mind and reason. Both Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo place sense-experience at a lower level of consciousness. Both of them are of the opinion that reason cannot grasp the truth of the infinite. It has no means of direct awareness. Intellect fails to know the true nature of reality. Here, Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo agree to the views of Śaṅkara in the East and Bergson in the West. Śaṅkara emphasizes the point that discursive thinking,
however extended, cannot lead us to an apprehension of reality. Bergson too holds that intellect find it easy to distinguish and separate, but when it synthesizes it is artificial in its method and results. It gives us a patchwork and not a harmony. But these two philosophers differ from Bergson when they say that intuition and intellect are not opposed to each other. For Bergson intuition should differ from and even oppose to intellect.

Like Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo too says that intuition reveals to us that truth which is not ordinarily accessible to the mind. It is the direct awareness of things. Here the knower and the known are one through knowledge. Sri Aurobindo undoubtedly gives intuition a higher place than reason. Reason fails to deal with the suprarational. The suprarational is the realm of the spirit and in the largeness, profundity and complexity of its movement the reason is lost. Here intuition or inner experience alone are the guide. But unlike Radhakrishnan Sri Aurobindo holds that reason can occasionally come to the aid of intuition. He says, "Intuition is unable to give us the truths in that ordered and articulated form which our nature demands. Before it could effect any such completeness of direct knowledge in us, it would have to organise itself in our surface being and take possession there of the leading part. But in our surface being it is not the Intuition, it is the Reason which is organised and helps us to order our perceptions, thoughts and actions."

Another point of difference between Radhakrishnan and Sri Aurobindo is that while Radhakrishnan places intuition at the highest
level of consciousness, Sri Aurobindo does not. For Sri Aurobindo our intuitions have suffered from the fundamental defect that they are mind controlled. All the defects of intuition - their flashy character, their particularity, their limited range are due to their being under the control of the mind. Radhakrishnan, on the contrary, is of the opinion that intuition is the only kind of absolute knowledge.

Radhakrishnan’s epistemology may be said to be constructed out of the three elements of the three systems, viz., Absolute Idealism, Intuitionism and Mysticism. As he is a Vedāntist, so his aim is to make these three methods conform to one standard, viz., the method of advaita Vedānta. Thus by a process of re-interpretation of these three as well as the epistemology of Vedānta, he constructs a new method of knowledge adequate to ultimate reality, which is known as "integral experience". Similarly, in Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy "integral yoga" is the method. To Sri Aurobindo, there is no difference between knowing and being. Hence, to know the Divine, the philosopher must become Divine. According to Sri Aurobindo, it is in yoga alone that the spiritual intuition manifests in its fullness and the integral knowledge is attained. Yogic knowledge is the authentic knowledge of the Divine “If philosophy is not to be confined in epistemology, it must be based on a knowledge attained through whole being.” The integral method of Sri Aurobindo consists of logic of the Infinite and Spiritual Intuition which are based on Integral Yoga. It
includes intuitionism and mysticism, finds their limit and subordinates them to yoga.

After analysing the epistemological standpoints of these two contemporary Indian Philosophers, it may be concluded that both of them have merits in their own ways. Radhakrishnan has offered an elaborate description of intuition, indicates its distinction from other sources of knowledge and shows the way of attaining the knowledge of Reality. Sri Aurobindo too describes elaborately the different sources of knowledge, levels of consciousness, seven-fold ignorance and shows the ways of getting rid of these seven-fold ignorance. Though the methods of approach are not the same, yet the aim of these two philosophers is the same. The aim is to arrive at the knowledge of the Supreme Reality. Both of them agree on the point that the knowledge of Reality is possible only when the knower and the known become one in knowledge.

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