CHAPTER 6

CONTEMPORARY VIEWS ON
SALVATION IN HINDUISM
CONTEMPORARY VIEWS ON SALVATION IN HINDUISM

The concept of salvation in Hinduism, as explained in the previous chapter, is given emphasis in the form of *mukti*, liberation or *moksa*. The scriptures of Hinduism, the different systems of Indian thought and the great saints who contributed to the development of this religion later emphasised the different aspects of this concept of salvation or liberation. In fact Hinduism can be explained as a great liberation movement. But what is the relevance of this concept of liberation or salvation to the modern man of today, who is in the midst of scientific advancements and technological wonders? What is the meaning of salvation in the contemporary world with its changing world order? Many contemporary Hindu thinkers have attempted to explain the meaning and relevance of the concept of salvation to the contemporary human society. For the present study, the views of two such thinkers, namely Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Radhakrishnan are taken into consideration.

6.1 SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo is a well known Indian Nationalist, a great Philosopher and a remarkable spiritual leader or Yogi. As a nationalist his approach to the independence of India is realised as revolutionary; as a contemporary Philosopher his approach to Indian thought is understood as very practical; and as a spiritual leader his approach to the spiritual growth of humanity is experienced as humanistic. Though he is very logical in his thinking he is
intuitive and mystical in his method. His contributions to the development of human society as a whole are considered to be very relevant and meaningful.

6.1.1 His Life

Aurobindo Gosh was born in a Bengali Hindu family in Calcutta on August 15, 1872. His father Dr. K.D. Gosh was a Doctor by Profession and he wanted to bring up his children in the English way of life. So, young Aurobindo had a European upbringing, had English education first in India and then in England. He had his college education in King’s College, Cambridge. He mastered many other languages like Latin and Greek. During his stay in England he became a member of a secret society of Indian revolutionaries in England. That society was known as ‘Lotus and Dagger’. His association with that group gave him the fervour of nationalism. In 1893, he returned to India and joined the Baroda State Service. During this time he concentrated on the study of Indian Literature, Philosophy and Religion. Though he was in the State Service as a Professor in Baroda College, silently he was supporting the National Movement. In 1905, the Swadeshi Movement against the partition of Bengal gave him the opportunity to give up his position in Baroda State Service and to join the National politics. Because of his involvement in the freedom struggle he was imprisoned many times. In 1908 when he was imprisoned in Alipur Jail, it is believed that he underwent some mystical experiences that really convinced him to take a different course of life. So he decided to get away from active political life and to pursue spiritual truth as a Yogi. In April 1910 he moved to Pondicherry where he lived till his end. During this time he concentrated on spiritual growth and started expressing
his views through writings. He published a philosophical journal, *Arya*, in which most of his important works were serialised. As a philosopher and a spiritual leader he gained many disciples from all parts of the world. One such eminent disciple was Mira Richard from France who later became the 'Mother' of the Ashram established by Sri Aurobindo. Of the numerous writings of Sri Aurobindo, his master piece is *The Life Divine*. Some of his other writings are: *The Synthesis of yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, *Secret of the Veda*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Supramental Manifestations*, and the epic poem *Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo gave up his mortal remains on 5th December 1950.

### 6.1.2 His Views on Salvation

Sri Aurobindo uses the term salvation to mean the spiritual evolution of the individual and rebirth into the divine life. Spiritual evolution means a spiritual change. As D.R. Bali says, "Spiritual evolution for Sri Aurobindo meant a spiritual change leading towards the achievement of total liberation of soul, mind, heart and action". This spiritual change is the transformation of human life from mere physical and vitalistic nature to the divine nature through a gradual process. Madhusudan Reddy observes, "Transformation for Sri Aurobindo is not moral or spiritual purification; it means a radical and integral transmutation of human nature".

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2. V. Madhusudan Reddy, "Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy" In V.C. Joshi, (Ed.), *Sri Aurobindo An Interpretation*, p.36.
According to Sri Aurobindo, in the course of evolution the gross is transformed into the subtle in order to be an adequate instrument for higher ascension. This is the ascension of matter, life and mind into their original or essential level. This ascension is meant by Sri Aurobindo as salvation and humanity can achieve this through the discipline of yoga. So salvation can be understood in Sri Aurobindo's thinking as a change of a lower state into a higher state; change of the state of matter into Divine; change of the state of ignorance into knowledge. This is explained by Sri Aurobindo as "to come out of this state of Ignorance and recover eventually the knowledge of the One Divine Being and into oneness with it and at the same time to recover its spiritual unity with all individual beings and the whole of universe".\(^3\) To be very precise, 'Salvation' is used in the sense of liberation by Sri Aurobindo. He says, "Our liberation and perfection is to transcend, ignorance, bondage and weakness and live in Him in relation to the world and Nature with the divine power, freedom and self-knowledge".\(^4\) Salvation as liberation is a perfection based on a purification. Man has got the unconquerable impulse towards perfection, towards God-head and the realisation of this is referred by Sri Aurobindo as salvation, liberation or mukti. This is explained by him as:

"In the liberation of the soul from the Ignorance, the first foundation is peace, calm, the silence and quietude of the Eternal and Infinite; but a consummate power and greater formation of the spiritual ascension takes up the peace of liberation into the bliss of a perfect experience

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\(^3\) Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p.661.

and realisation of the eternal beatitude, the bliss of the Eternal and Infinite."\(^5\)

Thus salvation, liberation or \textit{mukti} is referred as the soul's evolution of the gnostic nature, the State of \textit{Ananda}. This is explained by Sri Aurobindo as the freedom of the soul and "an opening out of mortal limitation into the illimitable immortality of the spirit."\(^6\)

One of the remarkable features of Sri Aurobindo's explanation of salvation is that it is not only individual but universal too. The attainment of cosmic salvation is the true destiny of man and this is possible according to Sri Aurobindo when the mental, vital and physical parts of man's being are transformed into a divine status and correspondingly causing the transformation of divination of the whole of mankind. He says very clearly that, "the liberation and self-fulfilment of others is as much our own concern - we might almost say, our divine self-interest - as our own liberation".\(^7\)

Thus there are plenty of dimensions to the explanation of salvation by Sri Aurobindo. But for the present study all these dimensions are narrowed down to two broad categories of a positive and a negative side of liberation. Sri Aurobindo himself says, "we shall give to the idea of liberation, \textit{mukti} only the connotation of that inner change which is common to all experience of this


\(^7\) \textit{Ibid}, p.425.
kind, essential to perfection and indispensable to spiritual freedom. We shall find that it then implies always two things, a rejection and an assumption, a negative and a positive side". Through this expression of negative movement of liberation, he means freedom from desire, ignorance, ego and from the gunas and the dualities of Nature. The positive aspect of liberation is the growth of humanity into the higher spiritual existence, gain of knowledge and becoming gnostic and enjoy bliss or become one with God. Let us analyse these two sides one by one.

6.1.2.1 Negative aspect of Liberation

By negative it is meant the do nots or the cessations. According to Sri Aurobindo man has to give up certain things like desire, ignorance, ego and the lower aspects of Nature. Humanity has to be liberated from all these things so as to reach its ultimate destiny.

6.1.2.1.1 Liberation from Desire

Overcoming of desire or cessation of desire or purification from desire is the right step towards salvation. According to Sri Aurobindo desire has two levels; one at the level of Prāṇā and the other at the level of soul. At the level of Prāṇā, desire is expressed as emotions of craving, preference, passion and so on and at the level of soul as rational turn of Buddhi. If we think about desire from the lower level it may be viewed that desire is essential to the ordinary man and he cannot live or act without cravings, preference and

Ibid, p.647.
passions. But when we analyse about desire from a higher level we can understand the fact that desires, passions etc. of the individual at both the Prana and the Soul levels are based on individual will and nothing to do with universal will. This is very clearly explained by Sri Aurobindo as follows:

"... the moment the individual soul leans away from the Universal and transcendent truth of its being, leans towards ego, tries to make this will a thing of its own, a separate personal energy, that will changes its character: it becomes an effort, a straining, a heat of force which may have its fiery joys of effectuation and of possession, but has also its afflicting recoils of pain of labour".9

So individual will based on individual desire will lead a person not to the bliss of liberty but to pain of labour and an imperfect tapas of self-śakti. If the very seed of desire is expelled, renounced then the soul gains higher knowledge or gnosis - the tapas of the divine śakti - and it becomes a participant in the bliss of the divine action and the bliss of divine Ānanda. Thus according to Sri Aurobindo the soul unifies in itself the prakṛti and the puruṣa.

6.1.2.1.2 Liberation from Ignorance

Ignorance is referred as so because in this state one is ignorant of the supramental vision and knowledge. The very purpose of the evolutionary process according to Sri Aurobindo, is the total spiritual transformation of the

individual through his liberation from the bondage of ignorance and inconscience. But unlike other Indian thinkers, Sri Aurobindo conceives ignorance as a form of knowledge in the sense of partial, fragmentary knowledge. From this state of ignorance only man has to proceed to the attainment of complete knowledge. So ignorance and knowledge are conceived as the two steps of the evolution process. Sri Aurobindo himself says,

"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 unconsciousness but that knowledge too emerges along with an emerging consciousness out of the inconscience."

Therefore according to Sri Aurobindo, ignorance is very much the part of the whole cosmic movement. In his integral approach there is no chance for a separate concept like māyā or ignorance out of Brahman. At the same time Brahman cannot be the origin of Ignorance or nor it is inherent in the multiplicity of souls. There is no primal or original Ignorance also. According to Sri Aurobindo the origin of ignorance "comes in at a later stage, as a later movement, when mind is separated from its spiritual and supramental basis, and culminates in this earth - like where the individual consciousness in the many identifies itself by dividing mind with the form". So the origin of


11 Ibid, p.579.
ignorance is explained by Sri Aurobindo as the limitation of consciousness which results in the minds identifying itself with not the whole of the Conscious-Force or Divine Tapas or 'shakti but the parts of it. Even in understanding the power of the Divine, man understands this more through the active expression of this. But there is a passive deep reservoir of power which is behind and which is unaffected by the activities at the surface. Out of ignorance of this deep power man tries to explain the divine power as he experiences it in its outward active expression only. B.K. Lal observes,

"Sri Aurobindo makes it clear with the help of the analogy of ocean and waves. Waves are aspects of the ocean, its active aspect -the aspect that is in motion, but lying behind is the vast and deep ocean that is unaffected by the movements at the surface. The two are not different, they represent the same energy or force".12

Thus ignorance is not conceived by Sri Aurobindo as non-knowledge or absence of knowledge, but as a stage in the development of the process of knowledge. He further explains the manifold nature of ignorance.

6.1.2.1.2.1 The Seven fold Nature of Ignorance

Sri Aurobindo while explaining the many sidedness of ignorance classifies it as seven folded.13 Human beings are wrapped up in seven fold ignorance.

12 B.K. Lal, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, p.191.
The first one is the original ignorance. That is, we are ignorant of the source of all being and becoming - the Absolute. According to Sri Aurobindo, we are ignorant of the Real and this ignorance is the most basic of all types of ignorances. So it is termed by him as the original ignorance.

The second one is the cosmic ignorance. It means that we are ignorant about the real nature of the cosmos. We are ignorant about the timeless, spaceless, immobile and immutable self. But we tend to think that the changes that appear to take place in the world of time and space as wholly real. This is referred by Sri Aurobindo as the cosmic ignorance.

The third one is the egoistic ignorance. This refers to our ignorance of the self itself. That is we wrongly understand that our ego, the I-sense, is the real, ignorant of the fact that all forms of being and becoming have a basic underlying unity. This is explained by Sri Aurobindo as the egoistic ignorance.

The fourth one is the temporal ignorance. This means that we are not aware of our eternal nature. We wrongly believe that our life in this space and time is everything and we are ignorant of our true life beyond this special and temporal dimension. Sri Aurobindo terms this as the temporal ignorance.

The fifth one is the psychological ignorance. This is regarding the normal human nature of giving importance to the superficial aspects of life. We are ignorant of the deeper complex and true nature of human beings "which is superconscient, sub conscient, intraconscient, circumconscient to our surface
becoming".¹⁴ This is mentioned by Sri Aurobindo as the psychological ignorance.

The sixth one is the **constitutional ignorance**. This refers to our common belief that life, mind and body constitute the whole constitution of man. So we are ignorant of the basic factor which constitutes life, mind and body and it amounts to ignorance of our constitution. This is explained by Sri Aurobindo as the constitutional ignorance.

The seventh one is the **practical ignorance**. This means that on account of all the above mentioned six ignorances humanity has lost its way, its goal and so its practical life has become chaotic and reduced to a mess. Sri Aurobindo explains this very clearly as follows:

"As a result of all these ignorances we miss the true knowledge, government of enjoyment of our life in the world, we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensations, actions, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questioning of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, strivings and failures, pain and pleasures, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, groove blindly for a changing goal..."¹⁵

Such a condition is referred by Sri Aurobindo as practical ignorance.


Thus Sri Aurobindo very clearly establishes the fact that ignorance in all its dimensions is creating a havoc in the life of human beings. Humanity which is entangled by ignorance has lost its way to its destination, has lost its vision of supramental state, it has failed to gain knowledge. So, such human beings have to be liberated or saved from the strangle hold of ignorance.

6.1.2.1.3 Liberation from Ego

Sri Aurobindo feels that ego is another factor which is limiting or preventing man from having a proper understanding of the self. He describes the nature of ego as the smallness of being and so it brings contraction of consciousness resulting in limitation of knowledge and the presence of ignorance; limitation of power and thereby incapacity and weakness. He further says that "ego brings scission of oneness and by that scission disharmony and failure of sympathy and love and understanding - inhibition or fragmentation of delight of being and by that fragmentation pain and sorrow." Egoistic attachment of mundane things is the cause of evil and suffering.

Sri Aurobindo talks about two classification of ego as mental ego and vital ego. Mental ego according to him is the creation of the mind. A sort of mentality is created by the mind as if the individual self is the supreme and this thought is dissolved with the mind at the point of death of the body. Vital ego is another classification by which Sri Aurobindo means that man feels that

his consciousness is the supreme achievement of nature and "holds up its
greatness and satisfaction as the highest aim of our existence".17 Thus from
the mental and vital ego - the limiting forces - man needs liberation or release
or deliverance.

Further in his explanation of the concept of ego, Sri Aurobindo says
that it is not just egoism to be removed but it is also removal of ego-idea, ego-
sense and the fundamental of these the ego-power. Ego-idea is that the
individual gives importance to the I, not realising the fact that the individual
is not separate from the universal and the both are terms of the higher and
vaster Being. Liberation from ego according to Sri Aurobindo requires getting
rid also of the ego-sense "which mistakes the instruments or the expressions
of our being for our true self and spirit".18 There is a substratum of ego idea
and ego sense which is referred by Sri Aurobindo as substratum or
fundamental ego sense - the fundamental ego power. This is explained by him
as "the pure fundamental ego-power supporting itself on the consciousness of
the mental Puruṣa".19 This ego is something vague, elusive and indefinable
and this gives the feeling that the actions of mind, life and body depend on
this. This indefinable, elusive, fundamental ego power is mistaken for many
a time for the infinite. Absolute release is possible only when this ego is
removed.

17 Ibid, pp.341-42.
18 Ibid, p.344.
19 Ibid, p.345.
6.1.2.1.4 Liberation of the Nature

Nature’s very important contributions to humanity are the guṇas and the dualities. According to Sri Aurobindo there are inferior forms of nature which have constant effect as the soul in its natural powers of mind, life and body. As a result of this we encounter a discordent and divided experience, a mixture of constant pairs of contraries, a combination of positives and negatives, dualities and so on. Sri Aurobindo observes:

"A complete liberation from the ego and the will of desire must bring with it a superiority to the qualitative modes of the inferior Nature, traiguṇyātitya, a release from this mixed and discordent experience, a cessation or solution of the dual action of Nature". The three qualitative modes mentioned by Sri Aurobindo are the guṇas explained in the Indian systems of thinking as sattva, rajas and tamas.

The three qualitaties or modes of Nature or guṇas affect every part of our natural being. For example, tamas is referred as the principle and power of inertia. According to Sri Aurobindo, this guṇa has its strongest influence in material nature and in our spiritual being, by creating a tendency of sluggish inaction or a mechanical action caused by obscure forces. The inertia caused by this quality is both of force and of knowledge. This quality brings in all the ignorance, inertia, weakness, attaching to mechanical way of doing things and without thinking accepting ideas mechanically. Thus Sri Aurobindo opines that

the quality or guṇa tamaś produces a dull, cowardice and ignorant type of human nature with impotent will, want of faith, self-confidence and initiative. Rajas is another quality or guṇa which can be explained as the life in us. As Sri Aurobindo says that, this principle has its strangle hold on the vital nature of kinesis, passion, endeavour, struggle, initiation and so on. But the action resulting out of this principle, on its own, leads to egoism, self-will, violence, attachment to opinion and all the vices related to passion and desire. So according to Sri Aurobindo this principle rajas produces "the vivid, restless, kinetic man, driven by breath of action passion and desire".21 Sattva is the third principle which has its strongest hold on the highest parts of mind dealing with reason and intelligence. It is the principle of assimilation, equilibrium and harmony which brings with it satisfaction, happiness, mastery and security and knowledge of limited nature. No doubt this principle sattva produces a higher type of human nature but not complete perfection. Moreover in all human beings there is a mingling of these three principles or guṇas in different proportions. So certainly these guṇas have to be transcended to achieve complete perfection. Thus liberation from the influences of these three principles or guṇas is very much needed.

Another dimension of the liberation of Nature is the liberation of the dualities of Nature. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, "In the lower nature the dualities are inevitable effect of the play of the guṇas as the soul affected by the formation of the sattwic, rajasic and tamasic ego".22 The soul, out of

21 Ibid, p.659.
22 Ibid, p.662.
ignorance, fails to see the inner truth of things but concentrates on the imperfect appearances which are represented as a tangle of these things. Because of this the soul has to encounter like and dislike, pleasure and pain, truth and falsehood, fortune and misfortune, joy and sorrow, success and failure and many similar dualities. Now the soul is attached to these dualities of nature and it is bound in the web of these dualities. So the soul needs liberation from its attachment or release from the web of dualities. The method of liberation or release from ignorance, desire, ego and the qualities and dualities of nature suggested by Sri Aurobindo is the Integral Yoga.

6.1.2.2 Positive aspect of Liberation

The positive side of liberation is referred by Sri Aurobindo as the growth into the higher spiritual existence. When liberation from desire, ignorance, ego and from the guṇas and dualities of Nature is achieved then the knowledge of the spiritual truth of oneness can be realised. "This integral liberation from the ego into the divine spirit and nature can only be relatively complete on our present level, but it begins to become absolute as we open to and mount into the gnosis". This is the positive side of liberation or the liberated perfection according to Sri Aurobindo. This can be further explained as the spiritual growth or process of development or evolution from Mind to Supermind and Śacchidānanda.

Ibid, pp.651-52.
6.1.2.2.1 The Progress of Development

The progress of development is the spiritual evolution of an individual towards the achievement of total liberation of soul, mind, heart and action. Real progress for man according to Sri Aurobindo is to evolve his spiritual nature over and above physical and mental nature. Sri Aurobindo says, "The law for humanity is to pursue its upward evolution towards finding the expression of the Divine in the type of mankind."\(^{24}\) The progress of development or evolution helps to transform an individual from a mere physical and mental being into a spiritual being or a divine being. Sri Aurobindo explains that, "Evolution is nothing but progressive unfolding of spirit out of density of material consciousness and the gradual self-revelation of God out of this apparent animal being."\(^{25}\) According to Sri Aurobindo evolution or ascent is possible because involution or descent has already taken place. The involution according to him is the descent from Pure Existence in the order of Conscious-Force, Bliss, Supermind, Mind, Psyche, Life, to Matter. The reverse order of it as ascent from Matter to Pure Existence is the evolution. Evolution of matter becomes possible because there has been an involution of the spirit into it. This progress of rising from matter, life and mind into their original or essential level of the spirit is referred as the process of evolution in Sri Aurobindo's thought. This process of evolution is further explained as the triple transformation.


6.1.2.2.2 The Triple Transformation

This is the evolution of mind to super mind and *Sacchidananda*. According to Sri Aurobindo this evolution becomes possible only through the triple transformation which consists of a psychic, spiritual and supramental transformation.

**The Psychic Transformation**: In the context of descent and ascent as downward and upward movement there is also a movement within or inwards and this is referred by Sri Aurobindo as the psychic change. The psychic being of an individual is explained by Sri Aurobindo as the lower level of his soul and this is the inner being or the hidden being Concealed Witness and Control, hidden Guide and so on.\(^{26}\) When this psychic being is awakened, then the progress of development towards the realisation of Truth becomes easy. This awakening becomes possible when the outer self or the surface personality of man gets rid of all egoistic impulses, desires by making a self-surrender to the Divine. So when the ego-consciousness is replaced by the self-consciousness, the human personality is changed into a psychic personality and that individual will be guided by his soul. This is the first step towards total liberation.

**The Spiritual Transformation**: The psychic transformation helps the spiritual transformation which is the descent of higher light into our being. At this level our nature is enlarged and we feel the close presence of the Divine

Being. In this progress of development there are four grades of ascent according to Sri Aurobindo. He says, "the gradation can be resolved into a stairway of four main ascents, each with its high level of fulfilment. These gradation may be summarily described as a series of sublimations of the consciousness through Higher mind, Illumined mind and Intuition to Overmind and beyond it".  The Higher mind is the first stage of this transformation. From normal mind which depends on sense experience and inference for its knowledge, the first step of growth is to Higher Mind. At this level, based on the soul’s realisation of its self-existent all awareness, a higher consciousness of knowledge is formulated. So, here knowledge is not obtained through premises or data but through the consciousness of self revelation of eternal wisdom. This may not be the integral knowledge but a total knowledge. Thus it serves a step towards the next level of spiritual transformation. The illumined mind is the second stage of this transformation. This is explained by Sri Aurobindo as a mind of spiritual light. The illumined mind does not work by thought but by vision, and it brings greater consciousness of Truth. Sri Aurobindo explains this as, "it throws on the physical mind a transforming light that breaks its limitations, its conservative inertia, replaces its narrow thought power and its doubts by sight and pours luminosity and consciousness into the very cells of the body". Thus it passes away for the next level of spiritual growth. Intuition is the third stage of this transformation. According to Sri Aurobindo, "Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more

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27 Ibid, p.938.

28 Ibid, p.946.
intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that laps out direct from a concealed identity. This intuition is explained by Sri Aurobindo as a spark or lighting flash due to the meeting of the consciousness of the subject with the object or the inward looking of the consciousness or when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things. So it is a flash of intimate truth-perception. But there is the possibility of misinterpretation of the intuitive light or it can be obscured by imagination and false imitative movements and so on. Hence there is the need for a higher step than this. Overmind is the next step and the highest possible in the spiritual transformation. This according to Sri Aurobindo is "a principle of global knowledge which carries in it a delegated light from the supramental Gnosis." At this level the ego-sense is lost in largeness of being and finally abolished. At this level the individual spirit experiences the consciousness of light and truth. But according to Sri Aurobindo the overmind is not the end of the progress of development or evolution because it is not able to transform wholly the Inconscience.

Thus the spiritual transformation with its steps like the Higher mind, Illumined mind, Intuition and Overmind is not the total liberation but a step towards it. The next step in this process is supramental transformation.

The Supramental Transformation: This is the highest stage of evolution where there is a total integral transformation of the mind, life and body. This

29 Ibid.
becomes possible according to Sri Aurobindo because, after passing through the process of evolution the soul receives the descent of the power from above - the Super conscience. He says, "the being and powers of the Superconscience must descend into us and uplift us and formulate themselves in our being and powers; this descent is a *sine qua non of the transition and transformation*.31 This descent only is causing the supramental transformation which can be explained as a total transmutation of our personality. At this level there is a real participation by the individual becomes an instrument of the cosmic spirit in the working of the Universal Energy. All our explanations regarding the supramental transformation are very much limited and this transformation transcends our comprehension. But anyhow with our limitations we understand that the supramental transformation changes an individual into a gnostic being.

### 6.1.2.2.3 Gnostic Being

V.S. Naravane, while explaining the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo says, "in the philosophy of Aurobindo the term ‘gnostic being’ is used almost in the same sense as ‘Superman’".32 The attainment of Supermanhood or gnostic consciousness is the goal stressed by Sri Aurobindo. The gnostic consciousness means not only the realisation of the supreme divine reality at the highest level of spiritual experience, but also the manifestation of the divine consciousness in the material existence. According to Sri Aurobindo the gnostic

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being develops a vast enlargement of vision, a cosmic consciousness. He says in one of his last poems as follows:

"I have learned a close identity with all,
Yet am by nothing bound that I become;
Carrying in me the Universe's call
I mount to my imperishable home"  

The gnostic being or the superman because of his cosmic consciousness understands all objective life as part of his subjective existence and thus realises the Divine in all forms. K.P.S. Choudry interprets Sri Aurobindo's idea of gnostic being or superman as follows:

"The gnostic being will no doubt at first seek the delight of self-manifestation of the spirit in himself but equally he seeks the delight of the Divine in all. He will experience 'cosmic joy' and will be a power for bringing the bliss of the spirit, the joy of being to others; for their joy will be part of his own joy of existence".  

So the aim of human perfection according to Sri Aurobindo is the fulfilment of God in man and the presence of divine in all. The gnostic being or the superman is working towards liberation or salvation of the whole humanity. Sri Aurobindo explains this concept very clearly in his famous epic "Savitri"

33 Sri Aurobindo, Last Poems, p.9.

34 K.P.S. Choudry, Modern Indian Mysticism, p.259.
also. So Sri Aurobindo emphasises that on the path of spiritual development human soul has to work for the transformation of the whole life on earth. The integral transformation of the whole of mankind is stressed here. A new humanity, a spiritualised humanity is thus envisaged by Sri Aurobindo as the culmination of the evolution process.

Sri Aurobindo's explanation of gnostic being bears a close resemblance to the idea of *jivanmukti*. But according to B.K. Lal, these two ideas are not identical. In his view the concept of gnostic being is richer than the concept of *jivanmuktā* in the sense that *jivanmuktā* even after attaining liberation continues to exist for sometime till the forces of *karma* work on the body to continue and when it is over then he attains *videhamukti*. "The supramental Gnostic being, on the other hand, makes himself one with the creative impetus and therefore, works for the emergence of divine life on earth by transforming others also into Gnostic beings". So it can be said that all gnostic beings are *jivanmuktās* but all *jivanmuktās* are not gnostic beings. The ultimate aim of gnostic being is to experience divine life, to establish the Kingdom of God or divine family on earth.

Divine Life is referred by Sri Aurobindo as a perfected life on earth and it consists of a race of supermen or gnostic beings. Through the triple transformation ordinary individual gradually goes up to the supramental level where the super conscience descends on him and transforms him wholly so as to ascend him to the level of gnostic being or superman. The work of the

gnostic being is to work for the liberation of all and thus makes the Divine life possible in this world itself. Now the question is how is this transformation possible or how to bring about this transformation? According to Sri Aurobindo, this is possible through the method of Integral Yoga.

6.1.2.3 The Integral Yoga

According to Sri Aurobindo, integral liberation can be achieved on the basis of gaining integral knowledge through the method he terms as Integral Yoga or Poorna Yoga. Yoga generally means union, the union of the human consciousness with the eternal and transcendent. Sri Aurobindo very clearly defines yoga as follows:

"To be one in all ways of thy being with that which is All, this is Yoga. To be one in thy Spirit and with thy understanding and thy heart and in all thy members with God in humanity, this is Yoga. To be one with all Nature and all beings, this is Yoga".  

To have such an experience Sri Aurobindo suggests the method of Integral Yoga. This is integral because of many reasons. Of that, to sight a few, this is not just individual salvation but a collective social salvation. Individual salvation without cosmic salvation according to Sri Aurobindo is like an isolated freedom. So in his method of integral yoga he is integrating the whole universe with the concept of salvation or liberation.

36 Sri Aurobindo, The Hour of God, p.17.
Sri Aurobindo's yoga is integral because it transforms the whole of man's being - spiritual, mental, vital and physical. Mind, life and matter are also illumined and transformed along with the transformation of the spirit. A very important point here is both spirit and matter are integrated in Sri Aurobindo's approach. His method of approach is to spiritualise all matter and divinise all life on earth. R.R. Diwakar comments,

"His (Sri Aurobindo's) yoga is not an escape of the soul from matter, life and mind as inferior modes of spirit manifestation; rather it strives to attain the highest consciousness in order to see that material, vital and mental existence is transformed into a higher instrument for ever higher transcendence."  \(^{37}\)

The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo integrates essential conditions like the quietness of mind; faith in the presence and power of the Divine in us and the world; aspiration to achieve the end; self-surrender to God; grace of God; and the self-awakening of the individual to receive the descent of the supramental light and power. \(^{38}\)

The integral yoga of Sri Aurobindo is a spiritual synthesis of the experience of Advaita, Vishistadvaita and Dvaita. This thought can be derived from the explanation of the three poises or sessions of consciousness of the principles of supermind by Sri Aurobindo. He says,


\(^{38}\) Sri Aurobindo, Bases of Yoga, pp.156, 164.
"The first (poise) founds the inalienable unity of things, the second modifies that unity so as to support the manifestation of the many in one and one in many; the third further modifies it so as to support the evolution of a diversified individuality which, by the action of ignorance, becomes in us at a lower level the illusion of the separate ego."  

These three poises of consciousness of the principle of supermind as explained by Sri Aurobindo, synthesises the experiences of Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita. The first poise reflects the one and not many principle of Advaita, the second one reflects the many and the harmony in one thought of Viśiṣṭādvaita, and the third one reflects the dualism in unity principle of contemporary of Dvaita. So, we find a spiritual integration of these three principles in the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

Above all the method of Sri Aurobindo synthesises the three yogas namely Jñāna, Karma and Bhakti. As per his approach salvation or liberation is possible only when there is a perfect harmony of knowledge, love and works. He himself says that, "I have stressed both bhakti and knowledge in my yoga as well as works, even if I have not given any one of them an exclusive importance..."  

Thus in many such respects the method suggested by Sri Aurobindo for salvation or liberation is integral in its approach.

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40 Sri Aurobindo, *Lights on Yoga*, p.94.
Salvation or liberation according to Sri Aurobindo is the total transformation of the self, not just leaving something and gaining something else. It is the transformation of the very nature of the self. This salvation is not just individualistic but it is a collective salvation or salvation of the entire humanity. This idea of mass liberation or cosmic salvation emphasised by Sri Aurobindo's is different from the traditional Indian spiritualism and no doubt a very relevant one in the present context. Another remarkable feature of Sri Aurobindo exposition of salvation is that it is not an escape from the world but the establishment of Kingdom of God in the world itself. This realistic approach of Sri Aurobindo is unique and comprehensive. This is further reflected in the method he suggests for salvation that is the integral yoga, which is an all-embracing and all-inclusive view of reality. The concept of salvation becomes more meaningful and relevant to the whole of humanity when Sri Aurobindo explains that those who have attained salvation work for the salvation of others and in fact for the salvation of the whole of humanity. Sri Aurobindo's explanation of salvation is very humanistic in the sense that his concern is about the growth of human beings into super human beings, a complete transformation of human nature itself and thus a change in the total life of humanity to that extent of experiencing the Divine Life in this world itself. But as D.R. Bali says, "the path he has shown is no doubt very difficult for common man to tread on, but it is a sure path towards a destination, to the future of real peace, happiness and human progress."
6.2 SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

Among the contemporary Indian thinkers of repute Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is one who is recognised all over the world. He is estimated today as a world philosopher and a prophet of a world community. In his expositions he indeed has a global reach, though he is very deeply rooted in Indian religion, culture, tradition and so on. As a philosopher - statesman he has given a new meaning to the multi dimensions of Indian thought like religion, culture, heritage and education. He has attempted a East-West synthesis in philosophy and in religion too. His analysis of religion is so systematic and wholistic he tries to see its relation with ethics, social action, logical thinking and even science. His contributions to the study of religion, especially to the various aspects of comparative religion like inter-religious understanding, fellowship of faith; and his vision of a world community based on spirituality are potential sources of new thinking not only in the present but also in the coming millennium.

6.2.1 His Life

Radhakrishnan was born on September 5, 1888 at a place called Tirutani in South India, in a traditional Brahmin family. He had a very religious and humble upbringing. He had his school education in Tirutani and Tirupathi and then his college education in Voorhees College, Vellore and in the Madras Christian College. The thesis he prepared in connection with his M.A. examination was published as his first book titled as Ethics of the Vedanta, in 1908.
After his education he started his teaching career, in the discipline of Philosophy, in Madras Presidency College in 1909. In 1918 he became Professor of Philosophy in the new University of Mysore. During this time he concentrated on extensive study of Western Philosophy and came out with some publications of comparative nature. His works such as, *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* (1918) and *The Region of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (1920) came out during this period only. Radhakrishnan occupied the prestigious the King George V Chair of Mental and Moral Science in Calcutta University from 1921 to 1931 and from 1937 to 1941. During this time he came out with his remarkable work on *Indian Philosophy* in two volumes (1923 & 1927). In 1926 he was invited to deliver the Upton lectures on *Hindu View of Life* in Oxford University, England. Around this time only in India he worked for the formation of Indian Philosophical Congress. In 1929 he was invited to deliver the Hibbert lectures at the Universities of London and Manchester. Those lectures were only later published as *An Idealist View of Life*. From 1931 to 1936 he was the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University in Waltair. Radhakrishnan was invited to occupy the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University in 1936. During that time he delivered many lectures and all those were later compiled as *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*. From 1939 to 1948 he served as Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. During that period only he delivered the Kamala Lectures at the Universities of Calcutta and Banaras. These lectures were later published as *Religion and Society* (1947). Between 1946 and 1950 Radhakrishnan lead the Indian delegation to the UNESCO twice and he served in the Executive Board and other bodies of the UNESCO.
between 1946 and 1951. He headed the Government of India’s Commission on University Education during 1948 and 1949. In 1949 he was sent to Soviet Union as India’s first Ambassador. During that time only he wrote the "Preface" to his translation of *The Principal Upanishads*. In 1952 he gave up his position of Ambassador to become the Vice-President of the Republic of India. He was in that position for two terms of five years each (1952-1962). In 1962 Radhakrishnan was elected to the highest office of the President of India for a term of five years (1962-1967). In May 1967 he retired from the Presidency and returned to his home in Madras. During that period, selections from his earlier writings were published by Hind Pocket Books Ltd., in the following titles: *Religion and Culture* (1968), *The Present Crisis of Faith* (1970), *Our Heritage* (1973) and *The Creative Life* (1975). On April 17, 1975, after a prolonged illness, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan passed away.

6.2.2 His Views on Salvation

Radhakrishnan uses the term salvation to mean the "reintegration of the human nature".42 It implies that man’s true nature or status is something else but he is in a disintegrated state, so the attainment of the true nature of man is spiritual according to Radhakrishnan and therefore salvation according to him is the realisation of complete spirituality. It means the getting out of the infirmity and corrupt nature of ourselves. In Radhakrishnan’s view salvation means a rising from ethical individualism to spiritual universalism.

42 S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p.46.
It stats with the individual and ends in the society. Some of the other terms he uses for salvation are liberation, freedom and *mokṣa* or *mukti*.

Salvation is *liberation* of ourselves from all bondages. Radhakrishnan says that it is a liberation from the slavery of the world to the liberty of eternal or deliverance from "the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of Children of God". Liberation is explained by him as the transfiguration of the whole man. Liberation means the total change of personality of man, that is man's personality is raised to its fullness and maximum expression. Radhakrishnan observes:

"It is attained not by destroying but by transfiguring the tension of human life. His whole nature is subdued to the Universal vision, is wrought to splendour and irradiated by the Spiritual light. His body, life and mind are not dissolved but are rendered pure and become the means and mould of the Divine Light, and he becomes his own master - piece".

Salvation is *freedom* from fetters, pains and sufferings. According to Radhakrishnan an individual is free when he attains universality of spirit. He says, "..... The highest product of cosmic evolution, ānanda or spiritual freedom". Spiritual freedom is the power by which we can transcend the

43 *Ibid*, p.47.
world and yet transform it. While commenting on Radhakrishnan's explanation of salvation in the sense of freedom, Dr. P.R. Srivastava says, "At the physical level it is freedom from pains and sufferings, problem and tortures; at the metaphysical level it is freedom from the bondage of ignorance which identifies the soul with the body".46

Salvation is explained by him as the Ultimate aim and final emancipation of the soul. He says, "it is release from finitude, fragmentariness, distractedness, unawareness, bondage. It is to be born again, to live in a condition of joy and holy healthfulness".47 *Mokṣa* according to Radhakrishnan is life eternal and we can attain this here and now. It is not removal from life or the world but involvement in the life in the world with a transformed outlook. That is the false outlook is displaced with a true one; it is the displacement of avidyā with vidyā. It is the development of a universal outlook which would be useful in helping the struggling humanity towards the fulfilment of the goal of history - *sarvamukti* - or the salvation of all.48 So *mokṣa* or *mukti* in Radhakrishnan's thought is divinising of the individual and thus the whole of humanity.

Thus salvation means to Radhakrishnan the reintegration of human nature, liberation from all bondages, freedom from fetters and achievement of the final goal. But man is not able to achieve his destiny automatically. Then


how can he be saved, liberated? how can he be relieved of his fetters and achieve the ultimate goal? Radhakrishan's answer to this question can be analysed based on his explanations of the nature of man, Mâyâ and Avidyā; and his recommendation of Religion as the way of salvation.

6.2.2.1 The Nature of Man

Radhakrishnan believes in the ultimate spirituality of man. At the same time he accepts the fact that man has got a unique combination of the reality of physical aspect and the reality of ultimate spiritual nature without any contradiction between them. He refers to the biological or physical nature of man as finite and the ultimate spiritual nature as infinite. The infinite nature is the true nature of soul. Radhakrishnan tries to use the meaning of soul in a broad sense, unlike the traditional belief, argues that the soul has its influence on the finite nature of man also. He presents a different idea that the physical and spiritual natures of man have close relations and one need not reject the physical nature for the spiritual growth. He says, "The realm of spirit is not cut off from the realm of life. To divide man into outer desire and inner quality is to violate the integrity of human life... the two orders of reality - the transcendent and the empirical are closely related". The bodily nature or the finite aspect is explained by Radhakrishnan as one stage or a phase which has to be surfaced to have a realisation of the infinite nature of man or the true nature of soul. The infinite nature is the spiritual aspect of man. This

is referred as the state of self-consciousness and Radhakrishnan describes this as an aspect of Divine in man.

Thus Radhakrishnan presents man at two levels, the level of nature and the level of spirit. Man is not a mere psychological, physiological or sociological being, but more than this his true nature is that he is a spiritual being. It is our duty to become aware of ourselves as spiritual beings instead of falsely identifying ourselves with the body, life or mind.\textsuperscript{50} as long as man does not understand this he is enslaved by the desires and passions of his physical nature he cannot progress towards the ultimate goal. Moreover according to Radhakrishnan in the contemporary world, man is in a crisis. Man tends to give more importance to his physical aspect than the spiritual aspect and this really leads him to many problems like divisions in the name of gender, caste, creed, religion, nation and so on. These divisions cause further conflicts and disorder and thus disintegration of humanity. Radhakrishnan says, "We are divided from our real nature, cut off from the universal in us by our egoistic impulses and separatist tendencies".\textsuperscript{51} He further feels that in the modern world today, in the name of technological development man is slowly forgetting his original nature - the spiritual aspect and thus gradually humanity is being mechanised. To put it in his own words, "In a technological civilisation, in a mass society, the individual becomes a depersonalised unit.

\textsuperscript{50} S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{Eastern Religions and Western Thought}, p.37.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid}, p.42.
Things control life". So man, humanity has to be saved from the crisis of consciousness.

6.2.2 Māyā (Illusion)

According to Radhakrishnan the world is not a māyā or illusion because it is willed by God and so real. But the reality of the Absolute - God is different from the reality of world in the sense the Absolute alone is non-created and it is the independent divine reality. All other thing including the world is dependent created reality. But some times the dependent reality - the world - may hide or conceal our vision of the reality. In this sense it is explained as māyā in Radhakrishnan's thought according to Donald A. Braue. So māyā as concealment of the Reality from our vision hinders our progress towards the final goal. Radhakrishnan explains this in the introductory essay to his translation of Bagavadgitā in the following way:

"As the manifested world hides the real from the vision of mortals, it is said to be delusive in character. The world is not an illusion, though by regarding it as a mere mechanical determination of nature unrelated to God, we fail to perceive its Divine essence. It then

52 S. Radhakrishnan, *Recovery of Faith*, p.21


54 Donald A. Braue, *Māyā in Radhakrishnan's Thought*, p.120 F.
becomes a source of delusion... God seems to be enveloped in the immense clock of māyā.\textsuperscript{55}

From the above given quotation it is clear that when we fail to perceive the world in its true sense then it functions as a source of delusion, a cloak or veil and thus a hinderance. Here the problem is not with the world, so Radhakrishnan says that the world is not an illusion. But the problem is with our perception of the world. When we perceive the world as something unrelated to God and fail to perceive its Divine essence then it becomes a māyā of concealment.

Donald A. Braue analyses the explanation of māyā by Radhakrishnan in five parts like māyā as concealment, as a source of delusion, as a distortion of vision, as an axiological concept and as ignorance.\textsuperscript{56} Māyā as concealment hides our vision of the real. It is explained by Donald that the vision of the real is very much needed forman to attain liberation or mokṣa. Since māyā is blocking or hiding or concealing that vision, it is preventing liberation of man. Māyā as a source of delusion is explained as a source of a persistent and false belief about the human self. The false belief about the self is that the true self (Ātman) is the same as the apparent self (ātman). Māyā as a distortion of vision is explained as dangerous if the truth about it is not known. It is as dangerous as a desert ‘puddle’. Māyā as an axiological concept is explained as a distortion of values and māyā as ignorance is explained by Donald as

\textsuperscript{55} S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{The Bagavadgītā}, pp.42,43.

\textsuperscript{56} Op. Cit., p.122f.
ignorance of the real self and ignorance of the spirit in all. This ignorance can be discussed further as another important related factor that is preventing man from attaining liberation or salvation.

6.2.2.3 Avidyā (Ignorance)

*Avidyā* or ignorance is a closely related factor of *māyā* according to Radhakrishnan. In his introduction to *The Principal Upaniṣads* he says, "The individual is bound down by *māyā* in the sense of *avidyā* or ignorance". As already discussed *māyā* as *avidyā* is a potential source of delusion and ignorance. Radhakrishnan explains *māyā* and *avidyā* as the two sides of the same problem in the sense that "*māyā* is more cosmic in significance, *avidyā* is more subjective". That is *māyā* is the objective side of the problem and *avidyā* is the subjective side of it.

The nature of *avidyā* or ignorance is explained by Radhakrishnan in the sense of the non-discrimination between the self and non-self. This means that, because of *avidya* man is not able to differentiate the true self from its manifestation. Moreover an obscuration of the self is also caused by *avidyā*. So it functions as a hinderance for man to have the realisation of the self. *Avidyā* is explained by Radhakrishnan as unawareness which is alienating man from the ground of his being and *avidyā* as unawareness gives rise to selfish desire.

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57 S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads*, p.87.

58 *Ibid*, p.89.
(kama). Because of this man is in a stricken or fallen condition. He is totally uprooted from his spiritual foundations. Thus avidyā is explained by Radhakrishnan as the source of evil, the chain which fetters humanity from achieving its destiny. Avidyā is further explained by Radhakrishnan as the source of our anguish. This feeling of anguish is because man out of ignorance has estranged himself from his original nature and thus develops a fear for death. Man, because of ignorance, gives more importance to selfish desires and isolates himself from his fellow beings and thus develops a feeling of loneliness. The fear of death and feeling of loneliness further develop division among human beings. Radhakrishnan observes: "Man falls into fragmentariness. He becomes a divided, riven being, tormented by doubt, fear and suffering. His identity splits, his nucleus collapses..." All those conditions naturally create a sense of fear, violence and many such problems among human beings.

So humanity has to be saved from ignorance, illusion and related problems like selfish desires, estrangement, loneliness, fear, violence, divisions and total reintegration. The way of salvation suggested by Radhakrishnan is Religion.

60 S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religions and Western Thought, p.43
61 Ibid, p.44.
6.2.2.4 Religion as the Way of Salvation

The humanity which is not conscious of its ignorance, which continues to be in illusion, in anguish, in the state of fragmentariness due to spiritual death is not condemned to be in the fallen state for ever according to Radhakrishnan. He feels that a resurrection of spiritual life, a reintegration of human nature, and an ascension of humanity to its destiny can be possible through religion. To understand the religious way of salvation as suggested by Radhakrishnan, we should understand his idea of religion first.

6.2.2.4.1 Religion

According to Radhakrishnan religion is an inward spiritual experience in which the spirit in man communes with the Universal spirit. He says that religion is "a kind of life or experience. It is insight into the nature of reality (darśna) or experience of reality (anubhava). This experience is not an emotional thrill, or a subjective fancy, but the response of the whole personality, the integrated self to the central reality". So religion means to Radhakrishnan a deep spiritual awakening, an inward integral spiritual experience of reality. This can be explained as the contact with or insight into reality. Regarding this Radhakrishnan further says, "The discipline of religion consists in turning inwards, deepening our awareness and developing a more

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meaningful attitude to life which frees us from bondage and hardening of the spirit". This can be explained as the personality transforming experience.

In Radhakrishnan's view, religion as an inward experience is not just a realisation but also new way of living itself. He feels that religion is the embodiment of Reality in regenerated living, it is life experienced in its depth. He says, "Religion should energize our consciousness, transform our character and make us new men". Religion is an attitude, it gives meaning and unity to our existence. Radhakrishnan says, "religions are not ends in themselves. They are instruments to carry forward God's purpose for mankind". He means that religion is an aspiration to act in the world. So religion means to him responsible action.

Thus for Radhakrishnan religion is a liberating experience and ethical action. An outward expression of this inward realisation in action is very much stressed by Radhakrishnan. He says, "If experience is the soul of religion, expression is the body through which it fulfils its destiny". Expressions can be in words and more through in action. He further says that a liberated individual has to work for sarvamukti, the liberation of all, he has to work for the welfare of the whole world. According to Radhakrishnan, the work for the


64 S. Radhakrishnan, The Spirit of Man, p.64.

65 S. Radhakrishnan, East and West in Religion, p.181.

66 S. Radhakrishnan, An Idealist View of Life, p.70.
world's welfare is imposed on the liberated, they will boldly work for a society in which man can be free and fearless, a subject not an object.

The marks of genuine religion as expressed by Radhakrishnan are abhaya or freedom from fear and ahimsā or love. Freedom from fear is to facilitate harmony, perfect agreement between body and mind, between action and thinking. Love is to promote understanding, sympathy, consideration and acceptance.

The purpose of religion according to Radhakrishnan is that "we have to be saved from ourselves, from the infirmity, from the corruption in our own nature". Radhakrishnan feels that religion, a moral and spiritual revolution can change the lives of human beings and "can place man above the idols of economic production, technological organisation, racial discrimination and national egotism". So the purpose of religion for Radhakrishnan is spiritual and it is the displacement of ignorance or unawareness by knowledge or awareness. The aim of religion is to illumine the mind, change the heart and transform the will of human beings and thus to create a new humanity. Hence the purpose of religion according to Radhakrishnan is to bring in a spiritual rebirth to humanity and to restore harmony and peace on earth.

67 S. Radhakrishnan, Recovery of Faith, p.162.
68 S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religions and Western Thought, p.46.
70 Ibid, p.104.
71 S. Radhakrishnan, Recovery of Faith, p.146.
question is, how to achieve the purpose or aim of religion? Radhakrishnan feels that this can be achieved through the religious way.

6.2.2.4.2 The Religious way of Salvation

Radhakrishnan strongly believes that salvation can be achieved only through the religious way. For him the religious way of salvation is an experience which consists of roughly three main aspects like purification, concentration and identification. He says, "they are not successive steps but different points of view. The path to perfection is more a slope than a staircase". But in another occasion he describes the religious way "as consisting of steps or ascents which are variously described as the purgative, illuminative and the unitive stages". Any how it can be explained that in Radhakrishnan’s thought the religious way of salvation is presented in three stages.

The first stage is explained by Radhakrishnan as *via purgativa* or the purgative way or the way of purification. In this stage the emphasis is on the emotional aspect. It is the *bhakti marga*. It is a stage of ethical preparation which is considered to be an essential prerequisite for spiritual insight. Mind must be cleared of its impurities and so a pure moral life is envisaged at this stage. With that, religious vows of chastity and poverty; ascetic practices, absence of cares and preoccupations are also accepted as methods of purifying

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mind. According to Radhakrishnan this moral training is explained very clearly in the first two heads of the eight fold means of Yoga (aṣṭāṅga). They are yama and niyama. Yama tells us about negatives like non-injury (ahimsā), non-appropriation of the property of others (āsteya), nonpossessions (aparigraha) and qualities like speaking truth (satya) and celibacy (brahmacya). Where as niyama talks about positive qualities like purity (saucha), contentment (santosha), austerity (tapas), study (śvādhya), and devotion to God (īsvara pranidhāna). So, by following these virtues and giving up vices man can purify his mind. According to Radhakrishnan, "The obstacles to perfection are the common defects of sensuality, avarice, glutony, enjoy and sloth and they must be put to rest". With bhakti if we do certain religious duties like reading the scripture, praying to God, remembering God in all our actions and so on, we can keep our mind pure. Passions and unwanted emotions are kept under check in this stage. The only emotion allowed is the emotion of devotion and love to the Supreme. Through the ethical discipline or moral way ego is destroyed, narrow and selfish interests and attachments are renounced, a broad outlook and love for others are developed. This state is explained by Radhakrishnan as, "every individual must subdue his senses which make for self-assertion; pride must give place to humility, resentment to forgiveness, narrow attachment to family to universal benevolence".

The second stage is explained by Radhakrishnan as via contemplativa or the illuminative way or the way of concentration. In this stage, the

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74 S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religions and Western Thought, pp.48, 49.
emphasis is on the volitional aspect. It is a stage of will or action. It is the \textit{karma mārga}. We are expected to do certain actions which would help us to grow further in our spiritual ascension. According to Radhakrishnan the other fold of yoga namely bodily posture (\textit{āsana}), control of breath (\textit{prāṇāyāma}) and withdrawal of the senses from the objects (\textit{pretyāhara}) function as aids of contemplative life. Thus the mind is eased of all other worries, it is disciplined and thus the stage is set for concentration (\textit{dhārana}) another fold of \textit{yoga}. It is a level of complete control of will, a total attention. When such a concentration deepens, mind gets fixed to the object of concentration firmly and this leads us into the next fold of \textit{yoga} - meditation (\textit{dhyāna}). Radhakrishnan says, "It is the gathering up of all dispensed energies, the intellectual power, the heart's emotions the vital desires, nay, the very physical being itself and concentrating them all on the supreme goal".\textsuperscript{76} Meditation is explained by him as silence and quiet \textit{tapas} which helps us to dwell deep in the divine and develop transfigured life. Thus "meditation is the way to self-discovery. By it we turn our mind homeward and establish contact with the creative centre"\textsuperscript{77} says Radhakrishnan.

The third stage is explained by Radhakrishnan as \textit{via unitiva} or the unitive way or the way of identification. In this stage the emphasis is on the cognitive aspect. It is the state of higher understanding or higher knowledge. It is the \textit{jñāna mārga}. This can be explained through the eighth fold of \textit{yoga} - identification (\textit{samādhi}). Radhakrishnan says that in this stage, "the conscious

\textsuperscript{76} S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{An Idealist View of Life}, p.89.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
division and separation of the self from the divine being, the object from the
subject, which is the normal condition of unregenerate humanity, is broken
down. The individual surrenders to the object and is absorbed by it. It is
a total identification or union of the self with the divine. It is the intimate
fusion of mind with reality. It is the intuitive experience and the knowledge
we derive out of this experience is the higher knowledge or *vidyā*. It is the self
evident knowledge or *Anubhava*. Radhakrishnan explains this by saying, "It
is knowledge by being and not by senses or by symbols. It is awareness of the
truth of things by identity. We become one with the truth, one with the object
of knowledge". Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao while commenting on the concept of
intuition in Radhakrishnan's thought says, "Intuition is wisdom transcendent;
it is different from intellectual knowledge, yet not discontinuous with it. It is
not centra-intellectual, but trans-intellectual". This identification with the
ultimate reality is not like a mystical experience according to Radhakrishnan
because, unlike mystical experience, this experience is an abiding one. When
the self has realised its original nature, through this ecstatic experience,
thereafter it lives with that sense of realisation only. This is referred as the
self-realisation that is the self realising 'that art thou'. This is the state of
liberation, salvation or *mokṣa*. Any individual who has attained this state
cannot isolate himself from others. Radhakrishnan says, "To be saved is not to
enter a region of blissful ease and unending rest. The saved one becomes an

78 S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religion and Western Thought, p.50.
80 Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, "Radhakrishnan's Spiritual Humanism - Theocentric"
elemental force of nature, a dynamo of spirit, working at a stupendously high velocity". Since the liberated one has lost his ego, the well being of others becomes his primary concern, so he works for the spiritual growth of others. Hence the transformed, liberated, saved individual works for the transformation, liberation and salvation of all others. B.K. Lal, while commenting on this idea of Radhakrishnan, says,

"Even when an individual is liberated, he does not become free from the cosmic process till all others are saved. The world process will reach its final goal when every individual will realise Divinity. Therefore ultimate human destiny is not individual redemption but universal redemption - sarvamukti - as Radhakrishnan calls it".  

In this idea of salvation for all Radhakrishnan’s view is similar to that of Aurobindo.

This liberation or salvation or unitive experience takes place in this life only, it is here and now, and it is not an other worldly experience as Radhakrishnan explains it. It means that the saved individual is a jivanmukta. But Radhakrishnan’s idea of jivanmukta is different from the traditional Indian concept of it in the sense that it is not fully free from birth. According to Radhakrishnan the saved individual has further duty to perform, that is to save others. To accomplish this duty he may take different bodily forms. But

81 S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religions and Western Thought, p.53.
82 B.K.Lal, Contemporary Indian Philosophy, p.285.
at this point this saved individual is a different type of person who is free from the bondage of love and passion for life and fear of death; free from egoism and selfishness. He is now guided by the knowledge and power he has gained through the unitive experience.

In this religious way of salvation the effort taken by a person as preparation for this unitive experience is purely individualistic, but once the person attains salvation the effect of that is for all. It means that the saved or liberated one no longer has a narrow selfish outlook, but gains a broad vision and mission. He works for the unity of individuals and welfare of humanity because of the love he has gained for the whole humanity through the identification of the self with the reality.

Thus the religious way of salvation explained by Radhakrishnan is an integral way. It is a way consisting of different stages of ascents connected to each other and thus it is an integral experience. Radhakrishnan says, "the emphasis may be on emotional, volitional or the cognitive aspects. We may reach the end through devotion, meritorious action and intellectual contemplation. These are not exclusive; they interpenetrate".\(^\text{83}\) In this integral approach of salvation, Radhakrishnan tries to integrate the other ways of knowing with the spiritual way of knowing in the sense he goes to the extent of saying that intellectual knowledge prepares oneself for the higher knowledge. So he observes: "Intuition stands to intellect in some what the same relation as intellect stands to sense. Though intuition lies beyond

intellect, it is not contrary to it. It is called samyagijnāna, or perfect knowledge. Reflective knowledge is a preparation for this integral experience".84

This religious way of salvation as explained by Radhakrishnan is integrating the individual with the universe. Salvation according to him starts as individual ethical preparation but ends up as universal spiritualism, divinisation of humanity or establishment of Kingdom of God on earth.

6.2.3 An Evaluation

Salvation in Radhakrishnan's estimate is the realisation of the true, spiritual nature, of self. This self-realisation liberates man from all bondages like narrow selfishness, ego, desires and illusions. Self-realisation is possible for individual and for the whole community. His emphasis on the idea of salvation for all gains more relevance in this present day context of many discriminations. Radhakrishnan firmly believes that the original nature of man is spiritual and so the self-realisation method should be spiritual or religious. For him religion does not mean mere external observation of rites and rituals, but it is an internal spiritual exercise. This does not mean that Radhakrishnan is against observance of religious rites and rituals... but he is against the present tendency among followers of religions to just externalise religion or giving importance to external formalism only. Thus his explanation of religion is very meaningful.

84 S. Radhakrishnan, An Idealist View of Life, p.115.
Radhakrishnan's explanation of the religious way of salvation as purgative, illuminative and unitive is really comprehensive because of its integral approach. It is integral in the sense of relating bhakti, karma and jnâna marga into the religious method of salvation. For him these three are not exclusive but interrelated. The religious way of salvation prescribed by Radhakrishnan is integrating intellectual knowledge and intuitive knowledge and he thus brings in a relation between reason and faith. This approach of him may be appreciated by the liberal minds of today. But the traditionalists and the fundamentalists may not accept this idea of Radhakrishnan. His explanation of the religious way of salvation is very relevant because it is integrating contemplation and service. The spiritual exercise of salvation, according to Radhakrishnan, does not stop with the contemplative realisation level only but it is expressed in social action also. The liberated individuals work for the liberation of others, welfare of others and they serve humanity with self-sacrifice love. Through such explanations of salvation Radhakrishnan is establishing the fact that religion as living experience is very practical, useful meaningful and relevant even in this scientific world of today. Radhakrishnan's explanation of salvation is very humanistic in the sense it gives prime importance to human beings and their well being. In fact Radhakrishnan refers humanism as a subtle rival to religion and feels that it can never be a substitute to religion because the vital spiritual element is missing in humanism. Where as in Radhakrishnan's humanism the spiritual element of man is emphasised and so it is termed as spiritual humanism. The type of spiritual humanism is the need of the world today. Radhakrishnan's
repeated emphasis on the spiritual element in man is a very valuable point to note. His vision of a world community on spiritual basis may be an answer to the present world community which is in a disintegrated state because of mistrust, violence and discriminations based on class, race, caste, religion, gender and so on.