CHAPTER-VII
CONCLUSION

In the history of absolutistic Philosophy, the Ultimate Reality has been presented in various ways right from the classical up to the modern times. Throughout the different ages there have been development and changes in the meaning of the conception of Absolute. Some of the views are completely new while some are reinterpretation of the ancient ideas in the light of new experiences.

In the preceding chapters of the work the entire effort was directed towards studying the different views regarding the concept of Absolute from the traditional period to the contemporary of East and West with special reference to Aurobindo. In the present chapter our endeavour will be summarized in the light of the preceding chapters and give some opinion on the basis of the same.

The first chapter of the study is introductory one and the chapter is used to confer a short description of Aurobindo’s concept of Absolute, general philosophy of Aurobindo, and the importance of Aurobindo as a philosopher.

The work on chapter II is devoted to the study of the development of the concept of Absolute in traditional Indian philosophy and a comparison of Aurobindo’s concept of Absolute with all these systems. Sankara conceives Brahman as one, non dual, indeterminate, changeless. His concept of Nirguna Brahman is a non-dual entity, without any quality and completely indeterminate. Brahman is transcendent of Maya, space, time, causality and the universe. His Absolute is pure being. Sunyavada and Vijnanavada both of the system of Buddhism come close to Sankara in this respect. Both Madhyamaka and Vijnanavada hold that the Absolute is transcendent and it is free from change, conditionality and all other phenomenal character and totally devoid of categories of intellect. The Absolute is the entity of an appearance. In essence Absolute is not different from appearance. So Absolute is both transcendent and immanent. Sankara’s main objection against Madhyamaka is its insistence that the Absolute is devoid of positive traits.

"As for Sunyavada complete denial of everything is not possible except on the recognition of some truth which cannot be denied."\(^1\)
It should be pointed out here that the Madhyamaka does not deny that there is reality behind the appearance but they deny the description of the Absolute in terms of either positive or negative traits. Sankara conceives God as immanent aspect of Brahman qualified by Maya. God is the material and efficient cause of the world. But God disappears with the dawn of knowledge. On the other hand Ramanuja's Brahman is determinate and Saguna. Brahman and God are non different. Brahman is not Nirguna, it is possessed of infinite number of qualities like omniscience, omnipotence and Brahman is the material as well as efficient cause of the world. While Sankara conceives Brahman as devoid of homogeneous, heterogeneous and internal differences; Ramanuja says that though Brahman is devoid of homogeneous and heterogeneous difference; Brahman is possessed of internal distinctions. Matter and finite selves are integral parts of Brahman. Gita also emphasizes the personal aspect of Brahman. Brahman is God and is the creator and sustainer of the world. The concept of pure non-dual Brahman of Sankara and Mahayanists philosophers ; Saguna, determinate Brahman of Ramanuja and Gita., which is endowed with all supernatural qualities and powers-forms a remarkable evolution in the history of philosophy regarding the concept of Absolute. Most of the Upanishads barring some like the Katha and the Svetasvatara emphasize both the personal and impersonal aspects of the Supreme. Inspired by the Upanishads Aurobindo contends to bridge the gulf between the dualism of Saguna and Nirguna Brahman. Aurobindo reconciles these contradictory concepts, and says that the various thinking about the nature of Brahman are only the figments of mind. Aurobindo gives due emphasis to both the personal and impersonal aspect of Brahman. Aurobindo accepts that Saguna and Nirguna Brahman are not opposite and different rather they are one Brahman in two aspects, positive and negative and each is necessary to the other. Aurobindo says,

“This opposition which is yet a collocation, as if these two were correlative or complementaries, although apparent contradictions of each other, sublimates itself into the co- existence of an impersonal Brahman without qualities, a fundamental divine Reality free from or all relations or determinates, and a Brahman with infinite qualities, a fundamental divine Reality who is the source and container and master of all relations and determinations is Nirguna, Saguna.”

Sankara describes the world as unreal. The world is not a transformation of Brahman, but only the appearance of Brahman. The world has empirical existence, but not absolute existence. Sankara holds that Brahman is the non-dual entity; which
is static. Shunyavada also affirms that the world is unreal as because constituents of the world is unintelligible. The real must be independent. But everything in this world is dependent on some condition. Vijanavada denies the existence of everything except consciousness. Vijanavada reduces all external objects to subjective cognitions. Objects are unreal and only citta is real. All these systems negate the reality of the world. But while Vijanavada lays emphasis on the negation of all objects, Madhyamaka and Sankara give importance on the non-dual Absolute. Both of them emphasize on the

"Negation of the Duality of Subject and Object in something. That, where the negation of duality (dvaya-sunyata) obtains, does exist and it is something in itself, the Absolute."³

The Upanishads refer in many places to Brahman as indeterminate, as non-dual entity. These statements deny the world of multiplicity. But there are also statements in the Upanishads like that the whole world is His manifestation, the world is His creation. The Upanishads teach us that all multiplicity disappears on the realization of Brahman; there is an identical relation between Brahman and world. In this respect Ramanuja’s and Gita’s concept come close to the Upanishads. World is a manifestation of Absolute according to both Ramanuja and Gita. God is present everywhere, as God creates the world out of his own being, as the Gita advocates. Ramanuja says that God stands for the whole universe. The world and the selves are the manifestation of God. The manifestation theory of Aurobindo affirms an integral relation between the world and Brahman, spirit and matter, unity and multiplicity. While advaita and Madhyamaka cut at the very root of the cosmos and its evolution, Aurobindo gives the divine status of the world and conceives creative evolution in which the Divine evolves and uncovers gradually and successively in concrete existence. The world is a Lila in which Brahman plays the game of self-concealment and self-realisation. The world is as real as Brahman itself. Brahman is not only Pure Existence; it is Consciousness-Force also. Brahman and Shakti, Shiva and Kali are one and inseparable. The world is not an illusion, as dynamic and static are two aspects of the same Reality.

Sankara says that Brahman alone is real and jiva is non-different from Brahman, from the ontological point of view, jiva appears to be distinct from Brahman due to adjuncts. The jiva is Brahman limited by the adjuncts of the body, the sense-organs, mind, buddhi and ahamkara. There is an identical relation between jiva and Brahman. The Atman is a passive principle in Sankara’s philosophy. Buddha
denies the existence of permanent soul; everything is impermanent and subject to the inexorable law of becoming or dependent origination. Sunyavada also believes in dependent origination. Sunyavada says that the individual self is neither five skandhas nor different from them. If the self is Skandha, then it should have origination and annihilation. If the self is different from the Skandhas, it cannot be known. So the individual self is non-existent. Vijnanavada also says that the personal consciousnesses are born in the Absolute Consciousness and disappear into it. Ramanuja's assertion is something different from Sankara and Mahayanist Philosophers in this respect. The relation between the individual soul and Brahman is one of identity. Ramanuja recognizes the Brahman, spirit and matter as ultimate and real. Individual soul and the world are the body and Brahman is the soul of it. In this respect Gita's concept comes close to Ramanuja. Jiva is the eternal part of God according to Gita. Body is born and dies but the soul is unborn, immortal. This assertion of Gita brings it so close to Upanishads that the two appear to have the same aim. The Jiva has four stages- waking, dreaming, dreamless sleeping and turiya, according to the Upanishads. In the turiya stage the jiva is known as Brahman. While Vijnanavada denies the existence of all objects and contends that consciousness can exist by itself without the object, Upanishads blend the subject with the object by the great saying "Tat tvam asi". Aurobindo's philosophy is quite close to the Upanishadic concept in this respect. The conception of soul is unique in the philosophy of Aurobindo. Aurobindo's concept of double soul gives the individuality of jivas and on the other hand points out the fact that we are one with Sachchidananda. Jivatman is Sachchidananda and is our central being. Jivatman is the transcendental entity and free from the attachment with the world. Psychic being is the representative of the Jivatman. Psychic being or Atman is a dynamic being. This is the soul in us which is a flame born out of the Divine. The psychic being participates secretly in our daily activities and inhabits our mind, life and body. The soul has not yet taken control of our lower nature, only works in an indirect manner. When the soul is fully manifested in us, it takes the control of body, life and mind. When one realizes his soul, it exerts pressure on the lower nature and transmutes and purifies his mind, life and body into the spiritual nature. Like Sankara Aurobindo conceives that the individual soul is identical with Brahman and on the other hand individual soul is not completely different from Brahman. Double soul means that our central being is Brahman itself
and psychic being is that which takes part in the activities of life. We are one with Sachchidananda because our central being is Brahman but we have also the individuality in us. In this regard we can say that undoubtedly Aurobindo had made an improvement on the traditional systems of Indian philosophy.

Sankara holds that Brahman is the only ontological reality. The Vijnanavada recognises the reality of one eternal Pure Consciousness. Madhyamikas say that Prajñāparamita or intuition is non-dual knowledge, and that is the Tathāgata. All of them reject duality as illusion. Madhyamika negates the conceptuality tendency, the Vijnanavada objectivity and the Vedanta difference. Sankara and Vijnanavada analyse the theory of Mayavada with the help of the superimposition of the rope. This requires two things the ‘rope’ and ‘snake’. But Sankara and Vijnanavada conceive reality as non-dual. Then the question arises as to how and from where this illusion comes from. So, there must be two existences, one is Brahman and another is Maya. On the other hand Sankara and Vijnanavada start with an empirical illusion, the ‘rope-snake’ and dogmatically extend its analogical application to the world illusion. Sankara and Vijnanavada cannot save their non-dual Absolute. Madhyamikas say that knower, known and knowledge are interdependent, and if one of them is false, the others must be false. But when one perceive a snake in a rope, the object is false. So, the knower turns out to be false, and all knowledge becomes false. Hence they conclude that all that we perceive are illusory. Madhyamikas cannot save them from the dualistic position. Ramanuja conceives Brahman as the highest reality, though not the only Reality. The two integral parts of Brahman matter (acit) and finite spirits (cit) are equally real. According to the Gita, there are two types of realities in the world, Kshar and Akshar. Beyond these both there is the God, purusottama. But Gita also believes that infinite being dwells in all beings. So, there is no qualitative difference between eternal spirit and finite being. Ramanuja holds that the relation between Brahman and the individual souls or the world is one of inseparability. In that case, Brahman should be affected by the distortions of the physical world which evolves out of acit. In Upanishads we find two different lines of thought regarding the world – as an appearance and as manifestation of Brahman. Svetasvatara holds that Brahman is the cause of the world, and Brahman by virtue of His inscrutable power Maya creates the world out of Himself in the manner in which a spider weaves the web by itself. Aurobindo by the inspiration of this concept of Upanishads say that real Monism
admits all things as the one Brahman. Aurobindo is an integral philosopher, and conceives the world as a manifestation of Brahman into different forms like—mind, body, life etc. The Absolute creates the world into different realities out of its own being. All the things of this world are only expression of the one Ultimate Brahman, so all are real. There is gradation in the realities, some are higher and some are lower. Sachchidananda is a harmony of all these realities. Aurobindo conceives matter as spirit, cosmos as Divine. Matter, life and mind seem to be negation of Spirit due to their respective characteristics. But the opposition is not real, only apparent and disappears in the course of evolution. Aurobindo’s concept of Absolute is integral in every sense, integral with itself as a synthesis of different realities, integral in its process of manifestation, integral in ascending itself from its involved stage. At every moment Aurobindo is able to maintain the oneness of the Sachchidananda and this is an improvement on the traditional system of Indian Philosophy.

Some systems conceive Brahman as determinate and some as indeterminate. But all of them agree in the point that Absolute is realized only in a non—empirical intuition, where the distinctions of subject and object are superseded; and essence and existence coincide.

The chapter—III of the study is used to cover all aspects of the concept of Absolute of Aurobindo. The foremost spiritual thinker of modern India, Aurobindo crafts a mystic philosophy of Brahman in which he integrates traditional Indian spirituality into a modern world affirmative philosophy attuned to science.

From the aforesaid chapter following points come to light. Aurobindo’s Absolute is an organic reality with the synthesis of the matter and spirit. He rejects the materialist’s emphasis on matter and the spiritualist’s emphasis on spirit. And he says that matter is spirit. Matter manifests the spirit from within itself, is preceded by the condition that spirit involves itself in matter. Matter is the lowest form of the manifestation of Brahman. Brahman manifests itself in different grades—matter, life, mind, higher mind, illumined mind, intuition, overmind, Supermind etc. The duality between matter and Brahman disappears in the course of evolution. Matter evolves into life, life into mind; mind into Supermind and finally the entire nature convert into Divine nature or God Himself. The apparent duality between spirit and matter disappears in the process of evolution and monism of matter and spirit is established.
The Absolute, according to Aurobindo, is Sachchidananda (Existence, Consciousness –Force and Bliss) all–inclusive whole. The Absolute as an Existence is the substance of all things. The Absolute is both Being and Becoming. The multiplicity of the world exists in one Being. The Absolute is not passive because the truth of the cosmos is involved spirit. The Absolute is all-existence. The Absolute is one but manifests in many. The Brahman is not only being but also basis of manifestation. So for Aurobindo, becoming is not an appearance or illusion as it is for Sankara. The reality of the world is maintained by Aurobindo as he conceives Being and Becoming are two aspects of the same Brahman and also says that Being is the substratum of Becoming and constitutes its essence.

Absolute for Aurobindo is Conscious-Force or Cit-Shakti. There is an inseparable relation between Existence and Force. Brahman and Shakti, Shiva and Kali are one. There is no opposition between Existence and Force because Force inherent in Existence may be at rest or it may be in motion. The Absolute is not subject to Force because though it manifests itself as Force, in its static and as well as dynamic aspect, it also transcends both. The root of all creations, manifestation or evolution is Conscious-Force. This is very important idea introduced by Aurobindo. Absolute is not passive, motionless and devoid of Force. Pure Consciousness without having capacity for manifestation is a dead existence. So Aurobindo conceives Brahman as both Consciousness and Force, Being and Becoming. He calls Conscious-Force the mother. It is the Divine Force which is not only behind the world process but is present in it in a latent form. So it does not mean mental consciousness. It is eternal Consciousness and implicit in terrestrial principles. Aurobindo is able to explain the world process successfully because he conceives Brahman as both Conscious and Force and this Divine –Shakti is the operative principle of all worlds – existence.

Aurobindo conceives Absolute as Bliss. All things are created and sustained in the universe by Delight. Cause of creation, evolution and manifestation, for Aurobindo is Bliss. Delight is the secret of creation, birth, the cause of remaining in existence, end of birth and Delight is that existence into which creation ceases. The purpose of creation, for the absolutely perfect Absolute is nothing but the joy of dancing. Creation is an ecstatic dance of Shiva. Aurobindo explains the world process through his concept of universal Bliss. But the problems of evil and suffering stand as an obstacle to the acceptance of everything as the manifestation of Sachchidananda.
Aurobindo gives a completely new outlook in respect of the concept of evil. Aurobindo denies the permanent and eternal nature of evil. Evil is a stage in the process of evolution. It will not obstruct our way for all times to come and will not remain longer with us. But in philosophical perspective we find that some, like Sankara try to solve this problem by denying its existence on the basis of cosmic ignorance. Evil is a product of avidya and vanishes at the dawn of knowledge. But this concept will destroy the general standard of morality. Like Sankara Aurobindo also considers evil as impermanent, but for him evil is a by product of individual ignorance, not cosmic ignorance. While Sankara lays emphasis on the absolute nature of evil, Aurobindo gives importance on the impermanent nature of evil and then resolves that evil is the by product of unconscience. According to some other philosophers like Ramanuja, evil is a permanent feature and it occurs due to wickedness, perseverive activity and God punishes the individual doer for the act of perverting. But such an idea gives the picture of an imperfect, cruel God and the individual will never get rid of evil. Aurobindo conceives neither evil as a permanent feature nor as such a cruel God who punishes the individual for forgetfulness. World is a manifestation of Brahman in different forms. Brahman is an all inclusive whole and individuals are parts of the infinite. So God should not look down upon the individuals which are his parts. Aurobindo says that the moral evil and the sensational suffering are the products of our limited mentality by the intervention of unconsciousness and wrong consciousness. It purifies the nature of man and makes him fit to receive the Divine light. The pure, perfect, blissful infinite Brahman is not affected by pain and suffering. Evil is only a stage in the evolutionary process. It has no permanent feature with the cosmos. Undoubtedly, Aurobindo's concept of evil gives new hope and bright future.

Absolute, according to Aurobindo is both transcendent and immanent. Existence, Consciousness-Force and Bliss are the transcendental aspect of Sachchidananda. Supermind is its immanent aspect. Supermind is the real creative aspect of Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda has infinite possibilities. Supermind selects some of them and actualizes them to maintain a cosmos. Absolute as a transcendent Pure Consciousness, devoid of power or force is nothing more than a passive and motionless entity. The manifestation of Sachchidananda is possible through the creative Supermind. Pure, static, transcendental Absolute becomes dynamic, immanent through the Supermind. Supermind is the God aspect of
Sachchidananda, extended in time and space. There are systems which have the conception of Absolute but deny the existence of God. Like Advaita Vedanta of Sankara, leads to world illusion or Mayavada. There are also some systems which conceives God’s existence but deny its nouminal existence. All these systems consider the Absolute and God as two distinct realities. It is in Aurobindo’s philosophy that we find the reconciliation of Sachchidananda and God. For him Supermind is not distinct from Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda is both Being and Becoming, Static and Dynamic, Saguna and Nirguna, Pure being and Force. Supermind is the real power of Sachchidananda and cannot be separated from Him. Supermind brings union of world with Pure Being. Supermind is the intermediary principle between Sachchidananda and the world. Aurobindo’s concept of Absolute is a combination of theism and absolutism blended in unity.

Creation means the manifestation of Brahman. The root of creation is the joy or delight of Brahman. And Aurobindo says that it is Maya through which the static, Pure Brahman puts himself under mutable forms. Brahman is all-inclusive. Maya is the power of Brahman to measure out forms out of the immeasurable existence. Maya has two senses—higher and lower. Higher Maya is the constructive power. It gives form in the formless, make finite which is infinite. Lower Maya is the deluding Maya and is the cause of world illusion. When we have overcome the lower Maya and attain higher Maya then we can understand the inseparable relation between ‘each’ and ‘all’ and we can know that the world is a play of God.

Sachchidananda descends into mind to create the world. The Supermind is the medium through which the Absolute can descend into the mind. The Supermind takes three poises in the process of creation. The first phase is preparation for the self differentiation. It is a stage of inalienable unity and manifestation does not take place here. Division proceeds from the second stage. Though the multiplicity starts in this phase, the absolute division in things takes place in the third poise. The Supermind is involved in the world and projects itself into the world process and does not stand behind. The three poises do not mean that there are three Supermind. The three poises signify the different ways to deal with the same truth. The problem of Advaita, Dvaita and Visistadvaita arise only due to three exclusive stress laid on either of these. Aurobindo establishes a synthesis of these by accepting the triple status of Supermind.

Creation is a plunge of the spirit into ignorance. While most of the systems of Indian philosophy believe that ignorance is the antithesis of knowledge, Aurobindo
conceives ignorance as a form of knowledge. Some philosophers hold that ignorance is different from knowledge; ignorance is opposed to knowledge and can be removed by right knowledge. But such conception makes a gulf between knowledge and ignorance. Aurobindo is an integral philosopher. To save his integral Absolute, Aurobindo conceives that ignorance is not a negation or the absence of knowledge; but a power of Divine Consciousness. From the point of view of degree, the knowledge of the Absolute is the only complete knowledge. What appears to be knowledge from one sight is ignorance from another perspective. Ignorance is an involved form of knowledge. So ignorance is potential knowledge. Ignorance is not original and neither cosmic nor individual. The non dual character of reality will be affected by the acceptance of either of these two. Ignorance emerges at a later stage of the movement of Consciousness –Force, when the spirit makes a plunge from the Supermind. So Aurobindo’s concept of ignorance seems to be an improvement on the classical view of ignorance found in the different systems of Indian philosophy.

Aurobindo’s Divine evolution is integral in nature. The all-inclusive Absolute is gradually revealed, manifested, unfolded from its involved state in matter through the integral process of cosmic evolution. Evolution is a double process of ascent and descent. The infinite spirit descends through the Supermind to the lower principles. Aurobindo conceives three stages of cosmic evolution; the inconscient, the ignorant and the supramental. The first emergent from the inconscient is matter, which is the foundation of the evolutionary process. Divine consciousness is involved in inconscience as a form and energy of matter. Aurobindo’s evolution is highly spiritual. Divinization of the world is the purpose of evolution from cosmic point of view. The union of the world with God is possible, because the spirit is involved with all its powers and aspects in nature. The double process of evolution –the ascent and descent indicates that the lower principles ascend to unite with the higher principles and the higher spiritual reality descends in the former ones. Aurobindo maintains the eternality of the world. The world is only a form of Sachchidananda, so it is real and divine. The acceptance of the principle of divinity of the world is an important landmark in the philosophy of Aurobindo.

The individual being and nature, according to Aurobindo are two modes of Ultimate Reality. The attainment of the Absolute is the earnest desire for all individual beings. Aurobindo holds that man has double soul- Atman and Jivatman. Jivatman is the universal spirit and is our inmost self. The psychic being is the
representative of the Jivatman. The Jivatman has unity with the Sachchidananda, but psychic beings are not yet completely merged with the Jivatmans. So Aurobindo conceives three kinds of transformation, which will bring a complete change of our terrestrial existence and transforms the whole being so that the psychic being completely identifies with the Jivatman. Here the distinction between Jivatman and Paramatma disappears and the dichotomy between the two is resolved because the Jivatman itself is identical with the universal or Sachchidananda.

Aurobindo, on the ground of his yogic realization proclaims the advent of a Divine life upon earth. The transition of man into superman and divinization of the lower principles through yoga is the only remedy for the present crisis of human society. The self-existent reality is secretly within us. The significance of our life lies in becoming divine, in the divinization of the inner being. The inner life is the preoccupation for the Divine life. The next preoccupation is to convert our outer being into a perfect instrument of that inner life. The spirit dwells veiled within us, the inconscience is an involved Superconscience. So to become a divine being is not any figment of imagination but it is sure and certain. “To be and to be fully”- that is nature’s aim working in us. “To be fully” means, in the first place to be wholly conscious of one’s being. Secondly it means to have the integral and intrinsic force of one’s being. Thirdly means to have the full delight of being. Lastly to be fully is not only to be universally but also to be transcendentally. To live a divine life is to realize our inner being, and this is possible only through the Divine Consciousness. So to attain the consciousness of eternal being, we have to transcend the terrestrial existence and have to use the mind, body and life as the instrument of the self. The fullness of individual consciousness and universal consciousness is possible through the Divine Consciousness only, because the essence of both is the infinite reality.

In chapter IV efforts have been made to present the relation of the finite beings with the Absolute.

The integral world view of Aurobindo is an affirmation of the Supreme Truth in the world where the finite and infinite are inseparable aspect of the same ultimate being. Aurobindo’s world view presents an integral relation between eternal and temporal, spirit and matter and establishes a unity in multiplicity. Aurobindo conceives an integral relation between finite beings and Brahman. The concept of finite beings of Aurobindo differs from the Buddhist as well as Sankara. The Buddhist presents man with the divinity, without admitting God; while Sankara identified man
(jiva) with Brahman. The Sachchidananda., according to Aurobindo, descends into mind, life and matter, through Supermind. Mind, life and matter are the terrestrial principles of all finite beings. Matter is a lower form of spirit. It is subordinate power of Sachchidananda. The opposition between matter and spirit are not real; matter is a form and body of spirit. Life is also a form of Consciousness-Force of Sachchidananda. Life is all- pervading and it exists in the animal, in the plant, the metal and even in atom. Life is a universal operation of Conscious-Force and acts in three forms- subconscious, conscious and self- conscious. Mind is a subordinate power of Supermind. Mind has the potency to become Supermind. Matter, life and mind are the different modes of same Ultimate Reality. And these terrestrial principles are the constituent of human existence. So Aurobindo maintains an inseparable relation between finite beings and Brahman.

The soul is another constituent of human being who inhabits our mind, life and body. Aurobindo holds that Jivatman is the spirit, the Sachchidananda which is in us. Jivatman is pure, eternal, transcendental and one with Brahman. It is not the principle of individuality and unaffected by the movement of the world. It is the essence, universal and same in all the individuals. The psychic being is the representative, the deputy of the Jivatman. The psychic being secretly takes part in the daily activities of man and transmigrates throughout the process of rebirth. The concept of double soul of Aurobindo does not mean that there are two souls. This means that our inmost being is identical with Sachchidananda and the inner being is that which takes part in the activities of man. The significance of double soul is that, by this concept Aurobindo is able to give the individuality of man as well as an identical relation between individual and Ultimate Reality.

Psychic being leads us to the Divine life. But at present instead of the psychic being mind is controlling us. The emotions and passions get preference and engage us in the activity for acquiring physical cravings. Awakening of the psychic being in us is an unavoidable condition for the purification of our lower nature by the psychic pressure. So Aurobindo conceives rebirth to proceed from ignorance to knowledge and ascend to the supramental stage. Human beings are real according to Aurobindo and Brahman exists in each being. To fulfill the destiny of life, for the attainment of unity with Ultimate Reality, rebirth is an absolute necessity. Rebirth is essential for the transformation of the lower principle, because one birth is not sufficient for this purpose. Aurobindo does not deny the desire soul, the terrestrial principles, in order to
establish the truth of Ultimate Reality. He lays stress on the act that the ascent into the
divine is to take place in and through these principles. His integral outlook gives an
actual status to the individual and conceives that man can ascend to the superman.

Man's past and present karmas, according to Aurobindo determine his future
birth. But at the same time he says that this Law of Karma is not the sole determinant
of the universe. And against the fatalism, he holds that it is the soul which uses the
Law as one of its instrument but not the Law of Karma which determines the destiny
of the soul. Aurobindo is a spiritualist philosopher and believes that central being of
man is spiritual and not mechanical. Mechanical law is absolute only over material
things. Aurobindo gives importance on will than fate. The spirit which is in us is not a
slave of past actions. The Law of Karma has application only those actions which are
motivated by desires for certain gains. But this law is not applicable to disinterested
and passionless actions. Aurobindo is neither in favour of fatalism nor in mechanical
theory. Human beings have freedom and he says that man will be, what he wants to
become. There is a secret consciousness and will, which guides and uses the
mechanical process for the future betterment of human being. Thus Aurobindo does
not support fatalism and gives immense importance to the individual spirit though he
accepts the Law of Karma.

The destiny of man is to become a superman on earth. Aurobindo explains the
integral relation of finite beings with Brahman through his concept of evolution. His
evolution is a divine descent and ascent as the downward movement from spirit to
matter and upward movement from matter to spirit up to the reach of Sachchidananda.. The descent of the Divine is the result of the self- concealment of
the Divine. Involution is not the end of the process. The next phase is evolution which
is an integration of the higher with the lower states. Philosophy joins hands with yoga
for this purpose. Yoga is a process in which the constituents of human beings get
divinely transformed. Aurobindo states three kinds of transformation – psychic,
spiritual and supramental. Finally the restoration of the original unity of finite with
the infinite is established, which is the aim of yoga. So the conception of salvation has
taken altogether a different turn in Aurobindo’s integral method. Aurobindo’s
salvation is not an escapism which means freedom from rebirth or cessation of
worldly existence. On the other hand it means a divine life on earth with perfection of
all the elements of an individual or with omniscient, omnipotent and blessedness. The
divine being is an integral being with divinized body, life and mind; and his soul
becomes united with the Supermind. The whole process brings a radical change in terrestrial principles and ends in a direct communion with the Sachchidananda. The Gnostic beings act in a sense of harmony. He establishes a harmonious relation between his own self and universal self, his will and total will; his action and total action. The Gnostic being leads a divine life on earth and control nature and uplifts the whole universe; because the goal of evolution is not only the salvation of an individual but the divinization of the whole universe. Aurobindo, being a spiritualistic thinker, his spiritualistic interpretation gives the true significance of life and the world. It is certain not only possible that man in his terrestrial life will become sooner rather than later, a Divine man. The emergence of a race of Gnostic Beings is the chief message of Aurobindo’s philosophy. This transformation of man will take place in the terrestrial existence, and the terrestrial life will receive the benefit of the higher light and there will be uplift of the world.

Chapter V is a comparative study of Aurobindo’s concept of Absolute with the contemporary Indian philosophers, Radhakrishnan and K.C. Bhattacharyya. The outcome of this chapter is summarized below.

Aurobindo’s concept of Absolute is at one with Radhakrishnan in upholding that the Supreme Reality is one. While Vedas and the Gita emphasize the personal aspect of the Ultimate Reality, most of the Upanishads barring some like the katha and the Svetasvatara, emphasize both the personal and impersonal aspects of the supreme. The impersonal is the transcendent and the personal is the immanent aspect of Brahman. Radhakrishnan and Aurobindo like some of the Upanishads give the emphasis to both the personal and impersonal aspects of the one supreme. The supreme in its impersonal aspect is inexpressible and can only be described by the two words “neti- neti” i.e. ‘not this not that’. The Absolute is indefinite and free from all determinations, according to K.C.Bhattacharyya also. Again he affirms that there are three forms of the Absolute- truth, freedom and value. The Absolute is not a synthesis of these three forms; for truth, freedom and value are independent forms of the Absolute and are incompatible with one another.

Radhakrishnan and Aurobindo conceive of God and Absolute not as two disparate entities but as two aspects of the one Supreme Reality. Both of these philosophers neither identify God with Absolute nor place God as mere appearance like other objects. The ultimate of philosophy and the highest ideal of religion,
according to Aurobindo, are only two aspects of same one Reality. Supermind is the God aspect of Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda is transcendental principle and the Supermind is the immanent aspect of the same Ultimate Reality. Supermind is the creator and controller of the world. Manifestation, creation, evolution, of Sachchidananda is possible only through the creative Supermind. Sachchidananda is both pure being and immanent force. The Supermind is not unreal nor an appearance of Brahman. The Supermind i. e. the creative aspect of Sachchidananda is as much real as the transcendent aspect of it. The Supermind is not distinct from Sachchidananda, because it is the creative aspect of the latter. Aurobindo calls God as determinate and the Absolute as indeterminate. While the former is manifest, the latter is unmanifest, though ultimately the two are one. In the same way Radhakrishnan also maintains that God stands as highest reality from the point of view of religion. God is the mere appearance of the Absolute but is the very absolute in the world context. The supreme is called Absolute when viewed apart from the cosmos and God in relation to the cosmos. K.C.Bhattacharyya also accepts that Ishvara is not really distinct from Brahman. Ishvara is Brahman endowed with Maya and is the cause of world appearance. Ishvara is the absolute of savikalpasamadhi according to K.C.Bhattacharyya, whereas Brahman is of nirvikalpasamadhi. Ishvara of K.C.Bhattacharyya is same with the Absolute Idea of Hegel.

Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan accept the transcendent, pure, qualityless Absolute with the reality of the world. For both of them the world is real because world is a manifested form or the actualization of the possibilities of one supreme Brahman. Aurobindo believes that the world is a creation of Force. The universe is the result of the multiple concentration of the supramental consciousness. The creation of physical, vital and mental is due to an unequal concentration of consciousness and multiple distribution of force in which there is the beginning of self division. There are three general poises of Supermind. Three poises of Supermind are only different ways of dealing with the same truth. The difficulties of the mutually conflicting theories of creation arise only due to their exclusive emphasis on either of these. As a manifested form of the Absolute the world is real and spiritual. Same conception we find in Radhakrishnan’s philosophy also. Radhakrishnan conceives God as a finite power of the Absolute. God creates the world. The dualism between God and the universe is found at the beginning. The creator and the created, God and the world coincide at the end. The destiny of the universe is to realize oneness with
God. K.C.Bhattacharyya's assertion is something different in this respect from both these philosophers. K.C.Bhattacharyya's philosophy can be called the philosophy of Abstract Idealism; because Ultimate Reality is arrived at by carrying the process of abstraction to its maximum limit. It is not an essential function of philosophy, for him to construct a synthetic view of the world. The causation and evolution are not the subject-matter of philosophy. They belong to the field of science. K.C.Bhattacharyya believes that Brahman is non-dual, so it implies that the world of duality cannot be real apart from that Reality. The empirical world is 'given' but it is not real. He explains the 'world as given' with the help of rope–snake illusion. In the stock example of rope-snake illusion the knowledge of snake is neither objective nor subjective. It cannot be determined either as real or as unreal, or as both real and unreal. Like rope-snake illusion, the world is also indeterminable but still it is given. K.C.Bhattacharyya also admits that though the world is indescribable, it cannot be ignored. Aurobindo maintains the unity of the world in his integral view of Absolute, as he states that all are Brahman.

Like Sankara, K.C.Bhattacharyya believes that Absolute alone exists. The 'I' is not real; it is only a symbol of the Absolute. The negation of 'I' is possible in the stage of complete freedom. There can be no relation between self and Absolute, because the former does not exist. So Bhattacharyya says the question of individuality which constitutes the soul is illegitimate. Bhattacharyya does not write anything regarding karma, rebirth, immortality and salvation. He adopts the advaita stand-point and feels no necessity of explaining these, from this point of view. Such type of explanation cannot satisfy us. Radhakrishnan and Aurobindo both of them successfully maintain the relation of individual with Sachchidananda and are able to save the individuality in us. Radhakrishnan conceives of the double self in man– the transcendental self and the empirical self. The former is a portion of God and the latter is a mind–body organism. The self is omniscient, divine, eternal, infinite and omnipotent being. The self has divine consciousness and power. To realize the soul is to unfold it. Self- realization is an identification of the empirical self with his transcendental self. The realization of one's inmost self, make him fit to achieve supreme identity, oneness and unity with God. Like Radhakrishnan, Aurobindo also conceives that our soul is constituted by Jivatman and Atman. This means that our central being is a portion of Sachchidananda and is transcendent to individuality. It is the universal spirit and has oneness and unity with the Divine. On the other hand
Atman participates in the affairs of the world. Double soul in man means it has two aspects - Consciousness and Force. The transcendent, eternal, pure being and immanent creative power are not two different realities. Both of these characterize the soul in its double aspect. Psychic being represents our individuality and Jivatman maintains an identical relation with Sachchidananda. Aurobindo emphasizes the Divine in man and tries to save the individuality of human beings with the greatest zeal.

Negation is the only way, according to K.C. Bhattacharyya to arrive at the Absolute itself. But Aurobindo's philosophy is integral in nature. His Divine evolutionism means the divinization of the individual and the universe. The goal of evolution is to reach Sachchidananda himself, from whom the world has originated. The Gnostic beings or Jivanmuktas, according to both Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan, do not reject their lower elements which get transformed by the power of Divine Consciousness and Force. Brahman is an inclusive whole from which everything born and ultimately enters into Him. While Radhakrishnan affirm that cosmic salvation is prior than the individual salvation, Aurobindo conceives that cosmic salvation is possible through Gnostic beings. So Aurobindo lays emphasis on man because though the world and the individual beings are made of the Divine Existence, man is the greatest among finite selves.

In chapter VI efforts have been made to compare Aurobindo's concept of Absolute with western philosophers Hegel and Bradley. The outcome of this chapter is stated below.

The Ultimate Reality, according to Hegel is Absolute self or Thought. Reality is all-inclusive and immanent in the world. Hegel believes in an Ultimate Reality which is thought and not a transcendent principle but immanent in nature and mind. Bradley believes in an Absolute-Experience which is by nature is immediate and non-relational and which is Reality in its complete and most perfect form. Bradley's chief objection is against Hegel's insistence that the Absolute idea is of the nature of thought. The Absolute is for Bradley beyond the reach of thought. In this respect Aurobindo's conception comes close to Bradley. Aurobindo also denies that Absolute is identical with thought. The Absolute can neither be identified with thought, nor with will nor with feeling that has so far emerged. The Absolute cannot be defined with any logical category. The indescribable Absolute is altogether different consciousness.
Hegel maintains that each individual is distinct though not separated from existence. The dynamic Absolute evolves from within itself the world of finite things and minds as manifestation of its own life. The finite minds and finite objects are not negations that is annulled or oppositions that is conquered but are progressive stages in the evolution of the Absolute in time. There is no opposition between thought and nature, because world is an external form of Absolute. In this respect Hegel perhaps comes nearer to Aurobindo than any other philosopher either in the East or in the West. All finites are, according to Bradley appearance of reality. Absolute is a harmonious whole of all finites. Real is present among the appearance in different degrees, so they are unreal only provisionally. The finites undergo transmutation and transformation and enter in the realm of Absolute and it becomes real. But Bradley's concept involves contradiction here. On the one hand Bradley says that appearances are the Absolute and on the other hand he contends that the imperfect and unreal appearance do not persist in the Absolute as they are, but in a transmuted way. Moreover Bradley nowhere gives a description of transmutation. Aurobindo conceives an integral relation between Absolute and its manifestation. The world and finite beings are only different forms of same one Absolute. The world is as real as spirit. There is no fundamental opposition between matter and spirit. Aurobindo clearly describes the relation between Absolute and the world with the help of his concept of evolution. Aurobindo conceives the creation and manifestation as two divine processes. Creation means the descent of the spirit into lower forms of realities; evolution means the manifestation of higher realities. So world and finite beings are not different from Brahman, they are only different modes of one Ultimate Reality. Hegel maintains an identical relation between Absolute and finite being. Regarding creation a question arises that why the Absolute which is self-fulfilled undergoes all trouble of self-fulfilment or differentiates itself into subject and object? Hegel tries to solve this problem by saying that it is a logical movement. But this explanation does not satisfy us. Aurobindo gives a satisfactory interpretation of creation by introducing the concept of 'Lila'. Creation is an expression of joy. Delight is the secret of birth, existence and death. Creation is nothing but a joyful game of Sachchidananda.. This game of Sachchidananda in relation to the world process is Lila. Creation is a play of self-concealment and self-realization. The Absolute is not imperfect and has no purpose in creation. The Absolute has nothing to realize out of creation and nothing wanting in it. Joy is the only purpose of creation. Neither there is any external law
which governs the creation nor is there any compulsion to do so. So we find a satisfactory solution of the problem between Pure Absolute and the manifold world in Aurobindo’s concept of Absolute.

According to Hegel Reality must be a concrete unity, a unity-in plurality. Hence the highest reality is a Person. All the things of this world are relative and finite. They depend upon one another as an all comprehensive system. Hegel believes in one divine reality, which instead of negating the contents of the universe; things of the world and wills of men; provides for their reality and development as necessary and integral elements of the divine being. The Absolute is all-inclusive, so nothing outside of it. Bradley on the other hand believes that Absolute is the Highest Reality and God is only a phenomenal manifestation of the Absolute. The Absolute is not active and devoid of qualities and indeterminate. God of religion is a personal being with qualities. But Absolute, for Bradley is neither personal nor impersonal. The Absolute is supra-personal and all inclusive experience. All appearances are harmoniously held together in the Absolute. Aurobindo could maintain the essential unity between God and Absolute as he states that Supermind is Sachchidananda extended in time and space. Sachchidananda is the transcendental and Supermind is the immanent aspect of the same Ultimate Reality. The creative aspect of Sachchidananda is Supermind. Sachchidananda has infinite possibilities and Supermind actualizes some of them. The manifestation of Sachchidananda is not possible without Supermind. Supermind is not distinct from the Sachchidananda. Sachchidananda is immanent and transcendent, static and dynamic, being and becoming, pure being and creative force. All creation, manifestation of infinite possibilities of pure being is done by the Supermind. The Supermind is the real creative power of Sachchidananda.

Hegel maintains that evil is not an illusion. Nothing is absolutely evil, because it is relative. Evil is not a negation of good. Bradley conceives that Absolute is an all-inclusive experience. Pain is a fact of the world. So Bradley raises the question that, can pleasure be predicated of the Absolute? But Bradley gives a contradictory answer in this respect. First Bradley says that the Absolute possesses and enjoys somehow the balance of pleasure. But later on he says that the Absolute perhaps, strictly, does not feel pleasure. Aurobindo gives a new and altogether different outlook; so far the problem of evil is concerned. The Absolute is in essence Bliss. Absolute is Joy and Delight. Evil is not an everlasting phenomena. Though evil is impermanent and a by
product of inconscience, it is not an illusion or unreal. Evil is a necessary step to
good, it is not a negation of good. It purifies the nature of man and makes him fit to
receive the spiritual light. When the evolution will go from lower to higher grade of
realities and reach to Supermind, on that stage there remains no existence of evil. In
this way Aurobindo solves the problem of evil in his evolutionary process and is able
to save the reality of evil and blessedness of God.

Hegel maintains an identical relation between thought and reality. Thought
constitutes the very nature of reality. Mutual dependence or relativity is the essence of
the real. Unity is real because there is plurality. Pure identity without diversity is
meaningless and abstract idea. Every form of knowledge is only different stages of
thought. Bradley conceives the Absolute as ‘immediate experience’. The difference of
the finites are transmuted and unified in the Absolute. But the very nature of thought
is to divide the real into parts, and make distinction within a continuous unity. So
thought cannot be identified with reality and thought is inadequate to give us
knowledge of reality. Regarding the knowledge of Absolute, Bradley gives
contradictory statements. He confesses that he has no direct knowledge of Absolute.
We have only a general idea of the main feature of Absolute but not in detail. Finite
beings cannot realize the existence of the Absolute fully. But again Bradley claims
that we have a positive and certain knowledge of the Absolute. In Aurobindo’s
concept we do not find such types of contradiction. Aurobindo is agreeing with
Bradley in conceiving that thought is not adequate for the knowledge of Ultimate
Reality. Aurobindo holds that though the Absolute is indefinable, it is realizable in
intuitive experience.

"The absolute Brahman exists only in its own identity and is beyond all other
knowledge, there the very idea of the knower and the known and therefore of the
knowledge in which they meet and become one, disappears, is transcendent and loses its
validity, so that to mind and speech the absolute Brahman must remain always
unattainable."

End of evolution, according to Aurobindo is not a rational end or thought.
Thought is not the Ultimate Reality. There are various grades of reality above
Thought which have to be climbed before the Ultimate Reality can be reached.

An attempt is made above to give some of the main features of Aurobindo’s
Absolute. His unique achievement is that he has constructed a complete and
comprehensive system about world views and attitudes. He has offered answers to all the traditional problems of Philosophy. He has sought to explain the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of creation, the existence of evil and suffering, the nature of reality, the status of individual self, the sources and types of human knowledge, the nature of values etc. His answers may or may not convince us; but they certainly provide an adequate basis for exposition.

Aurobindo gives the picture of a world in which spirit and terrestrial principles are all essential. For him truth is achieved not by a negation of any of these but by the transformation of them in the light of Spirit. Aurobindo attempts a vast and many-sided integration of metaphysics and religion, of idealism and materialism. Aurobindo goes deeper and seeks to integrate the fundamental categories of all existence. He accepts the truth of both materialism and spiritualism and refuses to recognise any basic duality between the world of experience and activity and the world of knowledge and reality. To explain the world Aurobindo takes the help of Supermind, which is the real and creative power of the Absolute which creates the cosmos. For Aurobindo the Pure Absolute is an empty absolute devoid of all contents. Sachchidananda is Saguna and Nirguna, Shiva and Kali. The transcendental and immanent aspects of Brahman have been advocated in the Upanishads and in other systems of Vedanta. On that account Aurobindo’s view may not be considered as perfectly original. But his perfectness and originality of ideas cannot be ignored on the point of his way and manner through which he reconciles the apparently opposed aspects of reality into an indivisible wholeness. His way of reconciliation no doubt presents a new ideation before our mind.

Aurobindo’s world view presents an inseparable relation between God and the world. Aurobindo’s manifestation theory reveals the advantages over the appearance theory of creation by affirming an integral relation in between so called contradictory entities because they are revelation of the same Absolute Reality. On the ground of the Upanishads, Aurobindo build up his theory of evolution. That is why he wants to see the cosmos in the fully divinised state, full of bliss and joy. So, to him, the evolutionary process will be continuing in its reversal process until and unless the whole universe will enjoy the vast eternal companionship with the Sachchidananda.

Aurobindo’s philosophy gives us assurance that the future will not be a mere repetition of the past but it will reveal undisclosed possibilities which we cannot dream of. The world will become abode of joy. The relative evil which is a product of
individual ignorance will disappear in the process of evolution. When the evolution will go from matter to life, life to mind, and so on to Supermind on that stage there remains no existence of evil. An altogether different angle of vision will lead all sections of people to co-operate in working out the destiny of mankind. The work of mankind would proceed to destroy all human classification, all sense of false superiority and find it united in a common bond of love with One. The individual will enjoy the felicity of God as his modes during his life time and will take birth again and again in the form of Gnostic being. It is a divine birth on earth. Aurobindo also talks about the cosmic salvation, the divinisation of the whole universe; because for him not only human beings but also the nature is the manifestation of the Divine Supreme Being. Thus undoubtedly this is the rarest contribution of Aurobindo. So we can affirm that his philosophy stands as a great challenge to the concept that philosophy of India died after sixteenth century.
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