CHAPTER - IV
MĀYA

The concept of māyā and ajñāna is a key-concept of Advaita Vedānta. According to Śaṅkara, Brahman is the only reality. The world is ultimately false. It is comparable to the rope-snake illusion. For explaining this world-appearance, Śaṅkara has taken the help of māyā or ajñāna which is an indescribable power of Brahman. Prof. Malkani has discussed this important topic in several papers and also in his books. Regarding the essential nature of māyā or ajñāna, Malkani’s view is in full conformity with those of Śaṅkara. But he has offered some very important explanations on some of the problems concerning māyā-vāda.

The conflict of dualism and non-dualism is a problem, which is to be solved in order to establish Advaitavāda. The world of multiplicity is a fact experienced by us in our day-to-day life. Until and unless this world of multiplicity is denied or rejected, non-dualism cannot be established. Malkani opines that, “Plurality of things is to be explained by unity, and dualism by non-dualism.”

It is argued that unity cannot explain the plurality. Plurality is included in the unity, but unity cannot explain them. The facts will remain as it is. Their unity in a higher synthesis is fictitious. But if they remain as it is, says Malkani, then they cannot be regarded as included in the unity and forming its parts. Parts cannot be wholly different from the whole. According to him the appearance is grounded in the Unity. They are not parts of reality, which is the ground. If the appearance is part
of the real then the appearance will be more real than the reality. It will be prior to the real. Again the whole provides some value to the parts. Parts separately may not be so valuable, but when they make a whole, they have some value. Value is made or unmade. The whole helps to make valuable the parts. But Reality is not value. Because Reality cannot be created. On the other hand whole can be made or unmade by the parts. “The whole cannot therefore, add to the reality of the parts. It is just the other way.” Appearance has no being. It is explained by the reality. It is explained in the sense that it is made possible by its relation to the latter. According to Advaiata Vedānta, Brahman, who is uncaused, the timeless and the eternal can not create. It does not act. Hence to explain the world appearance something other than Brahman is required. That something must create or at least be responsible for the made believe creation. According to Malkani this something which is responsible for the appearance of the world is the illusion or the error. It is due to error that we perceive the non-dual or multiple world which in reality does not exist. The non-eternal or the appearance is explained both by Brahman and the principle of error: Error is not ultimate. It explains the appearance of something that does not really exist. Error requires something that exists. Its ground is the Intelligent Being or Brahman. Now, the question may arise why there is error? Malkani points out that error cannot be explained. It is an irrational question that why there is error. Error should be rejected, but it is not possible to explain it. This non-eternal principle of error which explains is called māyā in Advaita Vedānta. Māyā stays in Brahman, and achieves its results in and for Brahman. Thus according to Malkani, Brahman is the only reality. Though māyā has no independent status yet it is necessary to establish non-dualism. Māyā does not contradict Advaitism.
Māyā gives the only possible explanation to the world appearance. Māyā has its logical necessity though not ontologically required. Ontologically Brahman is the only reality. “Ontologically Brahman alone is real. But logically we cannot altogether ignore the world appearance. The principle of māyā is therefore, logically necessary. If Brahman alone is the Real, then what is not Brahman is all illusory or māyic.”

Thus, for Malkani māyā or ajñāna is a designatory concept for the explanation of the world appearance. It is not possible to deny the perception of the world. Hence the world must have an objective reality. Perception means the perception of the thing as it is. A sense datum is not dependent on another sense datum. Each sense datum is complete in itself. Error arises only when one sense datum is judged by another sense datum. It means that if one sense datum is thought as another sense datum which is not existing at that time then only error occurs. And this error happens when there are some changes in the relationship of the conditions of sense-data enabling them to intuit directly some other sense-data or it may happen due to the evidence of some reliable person who have better knowledge about those sense-data. Thus the failure to identify the original sense-data is due to the change of the relation or because of the evidence of some other person. The original judgment is changed and the new judgment is framed. With the change of position the same sense-datum is perceived differently. And when the same sense datum is perceived by some other person is perception will be different and as a result the judgment is also different. Hence there is no erroneous perception because in either case the perception is true.

Malkani holds that though this argument is strong, yet it is not acceptable because there is no real objective world. There must be matter as the basis of this
objective world. Again, matter is nothing but sense-data. And if matter exists then the sense-data also exist. But the sense-data cannot exist by themselves. The sense-data cannot change by themselves or continue to be the same sense-data by themselves. If the sensation changes the sense-data also change. Hence there cannot be some permanent matter behind the sense-data because it cannot be said that sense data exist yet not perceived. Actually the reality of the sense data implies the reality of the spirit and not of matter. Matter cannot exist independently of spirit. Hence the world is ultimately illusory because the basis of the world i.e., matter does not exist at all. “The world as thus conceived is as good as negated in the spirit. The appearance of its reality is due to erroneous perception”. This illusoriness of the world is designated as mayā by Malkani following the Advaita tradition.

Malkani further argues that if matter exists independently then it must have some intrinsic properties. These intrinsic properties must be known by pure perception which does not involve any judgment. All other perception of it is erroneous. Hence error is found in perception not in judgment. According to some however, there is no such thing as pure perception. Mc Taggart, for example, maintains that every judgment is really a perception. Malkani opines that in that case we have to accept that every perception is a judgment. But perception requires an object to perceive. Something is perceived first then it is expressed as a judgment. As perception is not dependent on judgment. So logically, there can be pure perception. “The only alternative to the denial of all direct intuition would be the denial of all knowledge of objective reality. But if direct intuition is admitted, the possibility of erroneous perception necessarily follows”
It is argued that erroneous perception is a self-contradictory concept. Because in erroneous perception it is said that it is a perception but it is not the perception of the same thing. Malkani does not conform to this view. According to him it is not true that there is no erroneous perception. The fact is that the erroneous perception does not exist just like its object which is illusory. An illusory snake is no snake, yet it is said that there is the snake.

It is found that one perception is corrected by another perception. When a perception is corrected by another perception then that corrected perception cannot be regarded as right perception at all. And the experience of correction cannot be denied. There are innumerable examples of corrected perceptions. As a perception is corrected so it cannot be real. What is real cannot be changed or corrected. A perception is corrected if and only if it is not true. This means that the perception is erroneous. According to Malkani there is no distinction between right perception and wrong perception. Here right perception means the perception of the thing as it is and wrong perception means the perception of a thing as it is not. Malkani opines that there is nothing which is independent of the perceiving mind. As there is nothing outside so the question of correspondence with the object does not arise at all. According to Malkani by the fact that there is no distinction between right perception and wrong perception, it does not mean that all perceptions are right. With the abolitions of right perception and wrong perception, perception as such is abolished. There is no object to be perceived. As there is no real object so there is no real knowledge of that object. Malkani maintains that there is pure objectless consciousness or perception, which is real. That is Atman, when considered subjectively and Brahman, when considered objectively.
Malkani also points out that $māyā$ is not an explanatory concept. In his view, $māyā$ cannot explain the world appearance. He argues that “error occurs, but no one can say why error occurs. It is an ultimate irrationality.” This power of error is called $māyā$ in Advaita Vedānta. If it is said that $māyā$ can explain the world appearance then question naturally arises as to how $māyā$ can be explained. It is true that our thought demand explanation. But there is certain limitation, because in explaining something certain explanatory concepts are taken as true. Again the explanation which is found in philosophical matters is different from the explanation of common people. In philosophy explanation means dissolving of the problem. It is not possible to explain all philosophical problems by external explanation. Philosophy is related to truth which is based on our internal view of reality. “It is sometimes said, and with great conviction, that all things cannot be understood or explained by thought. The mystery of creation, for instance, is bound to remain”.

World is a product of erroneous knowledge hence it cannot be deduced from Brahman. Reality is the ground of the world. Hence the world can be explained only by perceiving beyond the world. Only higher knowledge can explain the world. Logically a world can be explained by pre-supposing a super-world. It can be explained by saying that the super world contains this world. But metaphysically unreal cannot be explained by the unreal. The world both super or lower is unreal. World can be explained only by entering into the very source of the problem of explanation. And that only can satisfy our higher reason. Actually when reality reveals itself to us there will remain no problem of explanation. And that only can satisfy our higher reason. Actually when reality reveals itself to us there will remain no problem of explanation as such. Hence $māyā$ is not required to explain the world. Because
explanation of the appearance of the multiple world is ultimately not required. Because, “the complexity of a world of facts is reduced to the simplicity of ultimate and self-evident truth”. Actually the world is dissolved not explained.

THE RELATION BETWEEN MĀYĀ AND BRAHMAN

Now, the question arises that, “What is the relation between Māyā and Brahman?” It is said that māyā is a power of Brahman. But if māyā is a power of Brahman, it must be admitted that then there is internal difference in Brahman. On the other hand if māyā is not a power of Brahman, then also dualism creeps in. For in that case there is both Brahman and māyā, which is sheer dualism. To solve this problem Malkani points out together with Śaṅkara that the so-called power of Brahman i.e., māyā is not real, it is illusory. Māyā as a power of error is true only for itself. It has no independent status both outside and inside Brahman. Like the illusory snake on the rope, illusory māyā is only grounded in Brahman.

It is true that this explanation of Malkani can satisfy ontological demand but logically this type of argument is not acceptable. Logically there is, on the one hand māyā, which is active and creative and on the other hand, there is Brahman who is inactive and not creative. And as a result this creative power cannot be totally non-existent. Malkani himself anticipated this objection and replies that Brahman is ontologically real and is not in need of any other reality for its existence. But māyā is ontologically dependent on Brahman and thereby is in need of Brahman. But this explanation also cannot satisfy logical mind. Our thought requires something more. Malkani admits that logically māyā will always be there as an Upādhi or adjunct of Brahman. And some kind of spiritual realization of the truth based on direct
intuition is needed to transform the intellectual recognition into the unquestionable truth of non-dualism.

**MĀYA IS BEGINNINGLESS**

Avidyā has no beginning, it is causeless. But it has an end; with the rise of right knowledge avidyā ceases to exist. It may appear contradictory to say that avidyā has no beginning but has an end. Moreover, it is to be noted that nothing that once exists can be totally destroyed. To this Malkani says that the nature of māyā is not like any other thing which is known to us. Hence, there is no contradiction in maintaining that beginningless avidyā is destroyed by knowledge. If I is said that avidyā has a beginning, then there must be some cause which brings it into existence. Then what will be the cause of avidyā? According to Malkani Brahman which is knowledge itself cannot be the cause of avidyā. The cause of avidyā must be something illusory. But the illusory is a part of the appearance which is the product of avidyā. Hence avidyā can have no cause beyond itself.

It is again argued that we ourselves are the product of avidyā or māyā. Hence avidyā must exist before us. Moreover, as avidyā exists for some time and then it is cancelled, it implies that there is both avidyā and Brahman at a particular time and then when avidyā ceases to exist, there remains Brahman alone. Error is beginningless. Malkani says, once an error is there, the pre-condition of it is another error in the past, so that error as such is without, beginning... "9 It cannot be said from what point of time error begins. It is also an illogical question for māyā to enquire about its starting time. Māyā creates wrong perception. And wrong or erroneous perception must be corrected and cancelled. As soon as the erroneous
perception of the rope as the snake is detected the perception of snake is cancelled. Hence there is the end of the erroneous perception with the right knowledge of its ground. Hence though beginningless māyā has an end. And this cancellation is a logical necessity. It is not temporal which may occur or may not occur. It is a fact that if a thing exists at sometime it cannot be totally destroyed. For example, when a jar is broken into pieces, the jar will continue in the broken pieces. Hence anything that exists cannot be totally negated. There is no transition from being to non-being. One form of being can be transformed into another being. Thus, it is impossible to eliminate māyā. To meet this objection Malkani says that māyā is not like anything of our common experience. The nature of māyā is solely different from all other things. Māyā is like the illusory snake. The illusory snake is non-existent in past, present and future. Hence the end of such thing which actually does not exist is different from the end of all other things. Again the end of a thing depends upon how a thing comes to an end. In the case of the jar the form of the jar is destroyed. And the form has no existence apart from the substance. A thing will be totally destroyed when its substance is destroyed. Or otherwise the distinction of thing means that “The thing as a whole is destroyed, when its very substance is reduced to a form which cannot possibly exist by itself and must require some other substance which is not destroyed. The illusory alone is destroyed in this sense.”¹⁰ Just as only rope exists in the place of illusory snake similarly only Brahman exists in the place of māyā. Again the illusory is destroyed by right knowledge. And if knowledge destroys something then that something is not real. Because knowledge destroys only that which does not really exist. Actually illusoriness is beginningless because it cannot be said that when the illusion starts.
And as the illusion has no real object, it is only wrong knowledge, hence it can be brought to an end. "Māyā with all its beginninglessness is still only an illusory appearance which never really existed. It is in this sense that the beginningless can be destroyed. The nature of the end i.e., end through knowledge, has an important bearing upon the nature of the thing ended".11

Malkani maintains that as māyā is illusory hence the world which is created by māyā has no reality. It is also illusory. According to some, God, the eternal has created the world at a certain point of time. But, Malkani opines that it cannot be acceptable because time is found in the temporal series and is co-existent with the world which is also temporal. Before creation there is no time. It is not true that before the creation of the world there is God and time. God is eternal and time is temporal. There cannot be any bridge between the temporal and the eternal. Before creation there is only eternal. There is no time. World is a temporal series hence it is created at time. The world is not created by something which is outside time or by time. As a matter of fact there is no creation. The relation between the eternal and the temporal is only of false identity.

Hence it is not true that avidyā exists prior to the world and caused the existence of the world. So there is no causality i.e., that avidyā is the cause and the world is the effect. It is only misperception. And misperception does not require to be caused "The supposition that avidyā exists prior to the world including the individuals and causes that world to exist, is thus seen to be quite untenable."

A question arises here as to what cancels avidyā. If it is said that Brahman cancels avidyā at some point of time then the question may be naturally asked why. He has not cancelled it before. The avidyā also cannot be self-cancelled
Because the same being cannot turn against itself. It cannot be cancelled by its own evolutes. Again in infinite time any possibility will be actualized. Anything cannot be produced or come into being that does not exist before. The process only repeats itself. What exists before will come again and again. No new thing comes into existence to cancel the previously existing things. "The end of the process will never come, for nothing can be produced which has not been produced before, and what has been produced before has not ended the process".  

According to Malkani avidyā never exists as an objective fact. It is not co-existent with Brahman. Avidyā is not a fact. If avidyā is accepted as a fact then we cannot get rid of it. As avidyā is not a fact, hence the question of its existence and its letter cancellation does not arise at all. As literally Brahman is one without a second hence he is the cancellation of illusory existence or avidyā.

**DIFFERENT THEORIES OF ERROR**

It is argued that avidyā is not without a cause. As it appears to exist hence it must have a cause or reason for its existence. But Malkani opines that the causality of erroneous perception is not like the causality as found in ordinary perception. In case of ordinary perception the object must be given. If an object is not given then there will not be any perception of that object. Sometimes it happens that a thing is given but it may not be perceived. But it never happens that a thing is not given but it is perceived. If all other conditions for perception are given except the object there will not be any perception. But in case of illusion perception, at all does not take place. It happens in a pickwickian sense. The reasons are different. For an erroneous perception there must be the perception of
a real snake at some time. If one never perceives a real snake before he will not misperceive a rope as a snake. Again a rope is misperceived as a snake because they have some similarity between them. A chair will never be wrongly perceived as a snake. If the circumstances are favourable then there will be no misperception that means if there is sufficient light, and the eyesight of the perceiver is not defective such kind of illusion will not happen. As there is not sufficient light or the perceiver has some defects in his eyesight so the rope is misperceived as a snake. Again it may be the case that the perceiver may be naturally in fear of snakes. All these conditions are responsible for the misperception of the rope.

Now, there are different theories regarding the status of the object of error and the nature of erroneous perception. Prof. Malkani alludes to these theories and refutes them.

According to some the object of illusion is a real object. This is the theory of no-error (akhyāti). According to this theory of no-error, the illusory snake is not an unreal snake. It is a real snake. They maintain that a particular real snake is perceived sometimes. Then later on when one perceives a rope which has some similarity with the snake and which is perceived not distinctly is regarded as a snake. Here the main problem is the non-discrimination between perception and memory. The snake in memory is confused with the perceived rope. Hence the snake is real. This is the view of Prābhākara Mīmāṃsākās.¹⁴ Malkani criticizes this view. He maintains that if there is no error in perception i.e., if the perception is true then one must be capable of distinguishing the perceived object and remembered snake. But in case of illusion this does not happen. The illusory snake
is different from the remembered snake. It is a new snake which is not found in reality.

According to the theory of mistaking one real thing for another real thing which is the view of Kumārila Mīmāṃśa, there is the error of perception, but the object of perception is real. Error occurs due to non-discrimination between two real things. Illusory snake is a real snake which is perceived in some other spatial and temporal conditions. The spatial and temporal condition of the rope is different from the spatial and temporal conditions of the snake. And one fails to discriminate these two spatial and temporal conditions and thinks the real rope as a real snake. Here two real things are confused for each other hence the object of erroneous perception is real.

Malkani does not conform to this view. He opines that one may perceive many snakes in the past. But the problem is that in the erroneous perception, which one of the real snakes appears? In the illusion it is said that this is a snake. Here it is not said that this is that snake. Actually the illusory snake is different from all other perceived snakes. The illusory snake does not exist in time and space. Hence Malkani maintains that, “We see one real snake, and after sometime and in some other place see another real snake, we do not say that the latter is the former, unless we recognize some mark of resemblance and thereby proceed consciously to affirm their identity. The same is the case here”.

According to another theory the illusory snake exists in the mind and not in the world outside. The mental snake is thought as existing outside. And the rope which is perceived as the snake is also mental. It is not an objective or real rope.
This theory maintains that illusion happens due to the confusion of the mental snake as the outside snake.

Malkani criticizes this view also. He said that a snake in the mind cannot be perceived through the senses. While the illusory snake requires sense-organs to perceive it. Thus the snake in the mind is quiet different from the snake in illusion. It is neither mental nor non-mental. It is unreal. Thus criticizing different theories of error Malkani concludes that as illusory object is not related to any real entity hence it is not caused. Illusory object is neither real nor-unreal; it is indescribable.

Sometimes a distinction is made between normal and abnormal perception. A normal perception is that where all the conditions of perception are positive. Hence there is the perception of the thing as it is. An abnormal perception, on the other hand, is that where the conditions of perceptions are not fulfilled as a result of which erroneous knowledge arises. Normal perception gives rise to real perception of an object. Hence it must have a cause. Malkani does not accept this type of distinction between right and wrong perception. Metaphysically this distinction is not tenable. All perceptions depend on some conditions. According to Malkani objects are produced by perception hence it is wrong to say that perception has relation to any possible existent object. He maintains that, "there is no perception which can be said to be true to the thing as it is in itself." In his view a right object is that knowledge of which is not contradicted. Our senses cannot give us such knowledge. The sensible object is neither independent nor self existent. Ātman is the only real thing because it does not depend on any outside agency. For knowledge which depends upon outside agency may change. Malkani opines that
there is no real object and as such there is no knowledge of objectivity. There is only pure and objectless consciousness.

Śaṅkara regards māyā and ajñāna as synonymous while some of the later Advaitins maintain some differences between māyā and ajñāna. In Malkani’s view also, though māyā and avidyā are not two different entities, yet there are some small differences also between these two. According to him, ajñāna emphasizes the power of illusion. Error is possible only due to ignorance. But this does not imply that ignorance and error are always related as cause and effect. It is not that ignorant people always commit or perceive error. In fact ignorance is such that it prepares the ground for error or it is better to say that ignorance is the fertile ground for error. Actually ignorance of a thing is not the case of perceiving it wrongly. Ignorance has a negative force for creating error. However, it is also true that error has no reason to occur. It is essentially indeterminate. If it is said that error is rationally preceded by ignorance then all cases of error can be explained sufficiently. But this is not the case. We cannot say that in the rope—snake illusion, as one is ignorant about the real nature of snake, hence he perceives the rope as snake. In fact, one may be aware of the real nature of the snake, yet he may misperceive the rope as snake. Thus we find that ignorance is not the determining factor for the occurrence of error. The ignorance of Brahman is not the cause of wrong perception. It is the appearance of the world which is responsible for the perception of the world. And this appearance of the world is caused by māyā, “all our perceptual knowledge is erroneous and all its objects illusory. This being in the concept of māyā as the ultimate explanation of the appearance of a world, and it can also point a way to truth”.17 Māyā creates the illusory appearance. And as
the appearance is illusory so there is no subjective reason to cognize it rightly and wrongly. All perception is illusory also. The absolute subject is that where the subject–object dualism vanishes. This is ātman. Both subject and object remain in the empirical level and are illusory. In the transcendental level there is only the ātman or pure self. And here lies the difference between māyā and ignorance. The bondage of the self is not due to the ignorance of Brahman but due to the perception of duality of Brahman and the multiple world. And duality or appearance of the world is caused by māyā. Because māyā has two powers viz., āvaraṇa and vikṣepa. By his āvaraṇa śakti it conceals the real nature of Brahman. And by its vikṣepa śakti it projects the multiple world before us which is the cause of bondage. If the perception of difference does not take place, then there will be no bondage “perception of difference is our principal bondage ………. We want to be free from illusions of all kinds, not ignorance………..”18 “We thus find that ignorance hides the truth, distorts it by super-imposing a world upon it, and finally abolishes the whole illusory appearance through one of its own products, namely knowledge.”19

Bondage is caused only when one degrades Brahman. When one identifies the Pure Spirit with the finite self and thereby degrades Brahman, the Pure Spirit, then only one falls into error and consequently in bondage.

Ignorance is static; it does not arise, Error arises. The world is created by ignorance. Hence ignorance is the cause of the world.

Malkani distinguishes between mūlāvidyā and tūlāvidyā or primary and secondary ignorance. Ignorance about Brahman the Highest Reality is the cause of the world-appearance. This ignorance is called the primary ignorance or mūlāvidyā. When
ignorance about Brahman can be abolished then only error regarding this world is removed. The ignorance about the empirical matters is called the secondary ignorance or \( \text{tulāvidyā} \). Science deals with this secondary ignorance. The ignorance about Brahman is the ground of all ignorance. The world appears due to this ignorance. Hence the secondary ignorance which is related to the worldly things is also based on the primary ignorance. Malkani also maintains that \( \text{mulāvidyā} \) or ignorance of Brahman precedes all other ignorance. Malkani here cites the analogy of sleep and wakefulness with ignorance of Brahman and all other ignorance. Sleep precedes wakefulness. Similarly ignorance of Brahman precedes all other ignorance. The state of sleep is known when one wakes up. Hence they are relative. The only sleep that we know is the sleep that is related to the fact of wakefulness, and that has for its content the negation of all content of wakefulness. If we abstract from our knowledge of sleep all references to wakefulness and its content, sleep represents nothing significant, it stands for no possible object of experience. “The so-called real sleep that precedes wakefulness is thus found to be only a false and illusory appearance.”

Just like sleep wakefulness is also not real. If wakefulness is real then sleep also will be real. Because just like sleep wakefulness is also temporal. Hence both states are ultimately illusory. The states of wakefulness and sleep are successive. And to witness these two states there must be something. This witness cannot be the ego. Ego cannot be present in sleep. It is because of the absence of ego we are ignorant about what happens in that state. Again the higher consciousness which is beyond the ego is also not present in these states. The higher consciousness has no states at all. “But ex-hypothesi, it neither sleeps nor does it wakes up.”
It is the thought – knowledge i.e., the empirical knowledge that perceives these successive states. The higher self is akrama-drk as it does not perceive the differences of the states. As there is no continuous entity to perceive the states hence these states have no reality. They appear as successive. They do not have any reality. Hence both these states are ultimately illusory. Malkani opines that, “The only reality is the stateless consciousness which constitutes the ground of this appearance.”

The Self which is not an object of any states is thus real. In sleep there is universal or pure ignorance.

This ignorance is positive and is not known by the mental modifications. Because mental modification requires the ego and ego is absent in sleep. The experience of pure ignorance does not contradict itself. According to Malkani positive ignorance is nothing but the absence of knowledge. There is no such thing that can be regarded as positive ignorance over and above the concept of absence of knowledge. According to some Advaita Vedântins positive ignorance can be understood with the help of the analogy of darkness. They argue that darkness is positive because it is seen. And it is not seen as an absence of light. Malkani opines that darkness cannot be seen by itself; it requires eyes to see it. Eyes can be stimulated by light. Hence to see darkness there must be light as stimulating elements. Again darkness cannot be regarded as something positive which is driven out by light. Light does not driven out some positive entity called darkness. Darkness cannot be seen as a positive entity. Because it has no shape, size, colour etc. Which are the pre-requisites for an entity to be called positive entity. Darkness means some streaks of light which has disappeared. It means that darkness is the privation of light. It is not something positive. Again in order that an experience to
be positive there must be some sense-object-contact but in darkness there is no such sense-objects-contact.

**T.R.V. Murti's View of Maya**

T.R.V. Murti, another contemporary Indian philosopher maintains that, "Avidyā is the principle of creativity (the Sakti of Brahman) by which the non-dual eternal Being, becomes, 'appears' as many and is differentiated. It is a beginningless quasi-positive entity, though non-eternal, and is of the nature of Name and Form (avyakta nāmarūpa) if functions in apriori way. The empirical world is a joint product of Brahman and avidyā."²³

Murti maintains that, "Ātmā is sarvasya ātmā, the Self of all. Brahman or Ātman is not one reality among other realities. If it were so, there is no point in calling the world false....... Appearance is the superficial or the surface aspect, and reality is its true essence, its real nature. In the order of discovery, i.e., in the order of our knowing things, appearance comes first, although in the order of existence it is the reverse....... "²⁴

Murti like Śaṅkara starts from appearance. According to him Brahman is the only reality; appearance has no reality. It has only phenomenal reality. And this appearance is ultimately cancelled by the knowledge of Brahman. Thus it becomes clear that Murti accepts adhyāsa i.e., the false appearance or māyā. And by discarding this māyā true knowledge of reality can be known. Because he argues that, "The Paramārtha is the end or goal that we seek to attain, and saṁvṛti is the means, it is the ladder or the jumping board which enables us to reach that
objective. It is therefore stated that samvṛti is the means (upāyabhūta) and paramārtha is the end (Upeyabhūta)."  

Now, the question arises that although the appearance has no real existence yet why it appears. Murti opines that it is due to avidyā or māyā. According to him avidyā hides the real from us and projects the unreal in its place. Thus like Śaṅkara and Malkani, Murti also believes that avidyā has two functions of concealing the real and projecting the unreal. He maintains that these two functions of avidyā are inter-related because the real will not be veiled if the false does not appear. As there is the perception of the appearance, so man cannot deny the world where he lives and works. And with this thought man forgets that these things are ultimately false. This non-realization of the true reality is due to the perception of the appearance. Hence perception has some sort of existence to hide the real. If man has the knowledge of the true-nature of reality then no illusion can occur. It implies, "the paramārtha, realized only negatively, only as we remove the samvṛti, the forms which thought has already, unconsciously and beginninglessly ascribed to the real. The real is to be uncovered...."  

Thus, in the view of Murti, māyā has logical or epistemological significance. Logically māyā is required to explain the world appearance. Māyā depends on Brahman. Ontologically māyā has no significance because Brahman does not require māyā. Brahman is free of māyā.

Murti also maintains that māyā is beginningless though it has an end. It is beginningless because it cannot be said that when the world and its sufferings come into existence. It may be argued that which has beginning cannot come to an end. To this Murti argues that in case of a tree it cannot be said that whether the tree
comes first or the seed comes first. This circle is beginningless. But it is true that as soon as fire burns, the tree comes to an end. Hence the tree which is beginningless will come to an end by some cause like fire burning, wood cutting etc. Similar is the case with avidyā. Avidyā can be destroyed by knowledge.

According to Murti, Avidyā is neither real nor unreal. It may be argued that avidyā which causes the appearance cannot be itself unreal. Murti opines that if avidyā is real than its products like bondage will be real. And in that case it cannot be destroyed by any means. Because that which can be cancelled cannot be regarded as real. It cannot also be regarded as unreal. Actually it is the avidyā or māyā which causes the world appearance possible.

Murti, further maintains that Brahman is both the locus and object of avidyā. Brahman is the āśraya of avidyā. Because the āśraya must be conscious. Brahman is the only conscious being. What is not conscious is called Jaśa, which cannot have knowledge and consequently the question of its ignorance does not arise at all. Only a conscious being capable of knowledge can be ignorant. Hence pure being i.e., Brahman is the locus of avidyā, particular being who is caused by avidyā presupposes differences, so it cannot be the locus of avidyā. Again the object of avidyā is also Brahman. Because when Brahman is known avidyā disappears Thus we find that there is only one ignorance i.e., the ignorance about Brahman, the reality because both the locus and object of ignorance are identical. Thus it follows that, “All ignorance is fundamentally self-ignorance, and knowledge is self-knowledge.”

The most striking point in Murti’s view on māyā is that he maintains that māyā is the freedom of Brahman. It implies that māyā is such a Śakti that with
this māyā. He is free to create this world. Because māyā helps Him to create this world not anything else.

Murti, though accepts that māyā is the Śakti of Brahman hence it is related to Brahman yet this relation is not necessary relationship. It is a one-sided dependence. Māyā is related to Brahman. But Brahman the ultimate reality is not at all dependent or related to anything.

Thus we find that Murti’s conception of māyā is very much similar to Malkani. Malkani also holds that the concept of māyā has logical or epistemological significance. Malkani also maintains that māyā is beginningless though it has an end. But in some respects Malkani also differs from Murti. Malkani never says that there is anything which is the Śakti of Brahman and Brahman creates this world. According to Malkani, Brahman never creates the world. Creation is no fact ultimately.

VIVEKANANDA’S CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ

Among the contemporary philosophers, Vivekananda is greatly influenced by Śaṅkara in his interpretation of māyā. However, Vivekananda does not use māyā in the sense of delusion or magic. He describes māyā as “Death is the end of life, of beauty, of wealth, of powers, of virtue too. Saints die and sinners die, kings die and beggars die. They are all going to death, and yet this tremendous clinging on to life exists somehow, we do not know why, we cling to life, we cannot give it up. And this is Māyā.”28

Vivekananda maintains that Brahman is the only Reality. Perceived world is real so long the real is hidden from us. From the lowest to the highest form of human being the same Brahman exists. But the real nature of Brahman is shadowed
or covered by *māyā*. *Māyā* by covering the real projects the unreal before us. Thus *māyā* has two powers of concealing the real and projecting the unreal. But there are degrees of difference in the matter of the concealment by *māyā*. It means that *māyā* covers Brahman in higher degrees in the case of the lower animals such as worms etc., whereas the covering of Brahman in lesser degree in the highest form of human being. But in both the cases Brahman or the reality is veiled. So both the states are unreal.

Vivekananda maintains that *māyā* is not an explanatory concept. It is not a theory to explain the world appearance. It is a statement of facts. It has already been said that according to Vivekananda the universal clinging of creatures to life even after knowing the truth of death is called *māyā*. Hence the concept of *māyā* is not used to explain something. It is the statement of the perceived fact. Vivekananda maintains that, “Thus we find that *Māyā* is not a theory for the explanation of the world, it is simply a statement of facts as they exist”\(^{29}\) The concept of *māyā* is required to designate man’s status in this world. According to Vivekananda *māyā* is not a theory. It is simply the combination of *Deśa*, *Kāla*, and *Nimitta*. And these time, space and causality are, responsible for the name and form of an object (*Nāma-Rūpa*). But the name, form and causation cannot hang independently. They are the same with their substance i.e., Brahman. Vivekananda cites the example of the relation between the wave and the river to establish the above view. Waves are different in name and form from the river. But they are different so long the name and form exist. As soon as the waves return to its original states withdrawing its name and form, it becomes identical with the water wherefrom it comes. Similarly self is identical with Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. But when it
is perceived in time and space and in causation which give it name and form, it appears as different from Brahman. This perception in name and form is what is called māyā. Hence māyā is not a theory to explain something. It states the fact, "The Adwaitist would say that all this cosmology and everything else is in Maya".30

Māyā is the cause of bondage of the human being in this world. But by nature man is free. Māyā is terrible. This world is māyā. Man must try to get freedom from the bondage of māyā by working within māyā. Time will never come when there will be no māyā and man can work in a blissful state. Because bliss is also accompanied by sorrows.

"Man feels, consciously or unconsciously that he is bound; he is not what he wants to be. It was taught to him at the very moment he began to look around. That very instant he learnt that he was bound".31 When man is in such a puzzling condition he takes the help of religion. Vivekananda opines that man worships God thinking Him as free from the limitation of māyā and enjoying more freedom than man. But according to Vivekananda the Personal God also belongs to māyā. He maintains that the Personal God is the same Absolute seen through māyā. "That Absolute under the control of nature is what is called the human soul, and the same when controlling nature is Išṭwara or the Personal God."32

According to Vivekananda Išṭwara is the sum total of jīvas. He is the combination of vidyā and avidyā. He controls māyā and is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world. He maintains that Brahman does not belong to māyā. He is of the opinion that though Brahman is the ruler of māyā yet He is not influenced by māyā.
Criticising the realists Vivekananda argues that the object has no independent existence. According to him, it is our common experience that all things are correlative. The existence or non-existence of one thing is related to the existence or non-existence of the other. He maintains that this correlative nature of things is due to the fact that one thing is perceived as many due to māyā. Vivekananda contends that it is due to māyā that the same Brahman appears as man, women, girl, boy all at different times. Hence it is due to māyā we perceive thing as independently real. Actually all are the same Brahman. Perception of independent thing is the first step which is ultimately perceived as many as the expression of one. And that one is the Reality who has no parts.33

In the view of Vivekananda, ignorance is not the cause of illusion. Illusion is caused by māyā. He maintains that, “What is the cause of illusion ?.............. The question is contradictory. Our position is that the Absolute has become this relative only apparently, that the unconditioned has become the conditioned only in Māyā”.34 Brahman is unconditioned but appears as conditioned due to māyā. Brahman is above time, space and causality. So the world illusion which is the concealment of Brahman cannot be caused by ignorance. Ignorance is worldly. The worldly ignorance cannot be the cause of the concealment of Brahman who is beyond cause. “We can use the words “I do not know” in two senses. In one way then mean that we are lower than knowledge, and in the other way the thing is above knowledge”35 Hence in the first sense of not-knowing implies that though one is ignorant about something, he may know it sometime. In the second sense of not knowing implies that the object of knowledge is beyond knowledge. It implies that so far knowledge is concerned it requires one subject and one object. But to know the Self, the self
cannot be both the subject and the object. As Brahman is identical with the Self so Brahman cannot be known in the ordinary sense of knowledge. And this ordinary sense of knowledge is related to ignorance i.e., the opposite of knowledge is ignorance. It follows that as Brahman cannot be an object of knowledge hence He cannot be an object of ignorance. Māyā, which exists in Brahman, causes the world illusion. Hence it is not ignorance but māyā which is the cause of illusion.

However, Vivekananda is not pessimist. In his inspired talks he opines that māyā can be destroyed. Though people starts with ignorance about the real nature of jīvas, yet he ends in knowledge. The flash of light that eliminates man’s real nature is within him. With the strong desire to get free man can get rid of māyā, because man ultimately knows that by nature he is free, "there is no birthright’, we were never born. All that we have to do is to drive away the clouds that cover it."36

RABINDRANATH TAGORE’S CONCEPT OF MĀYA

The word māyā is found in the Upanishadic philosophy. This word has reached its highest culmination in the Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara uses the word māyā in order to explain the world-appearance and to establish his non-dual Brahma-vāda. According to Śaṅkara māyā is the cause of the world appearance.

Rabindranath, a philosopher of ‘humanism’ has used the word līlā in place of māyā to explain the world appearance. The word māyā has a negative force, which implies that the world has no ultimate reality. Brahman is the Ultimate reality. Appearance of the world is illusory and it is false. Where as the word līlā has a positive significance which implies that the world is the beautiful creation of the lord to express his love.
Rabindranath distinguishes between the two sides of nature, one is outer and the other is inner. In the inner world there is the Visva-Devatā who expresses himself in and through the nature. In the beautiful expression of the world there exists the Visva-Devatā. But this concept of Visva-Devatā is abstract. And in order to find a concrete reality who is the symbol of love he introduces the concept of Jīvan-Devatā. He is the individual expression of the Universal entity. He is full of īla. Thus, we find the īla-vāda in Rabindranath. These two conceptions of nature, visva-devatā and jīvan-devatā are ultimately the same. All imply the same humanity. “Even those aspects of life which elevate man above Nature can be nourished only by assimilating, and not by repudiating, what he shares with nature. In man himself there is both Nature and Spirit. He is of Nature; also beyond Nature” 37

Visva-Devatā is the universal entity and jīvan-devatā is the individual expression i.e., the finite man. He meant by this that each individual is a God. He is full of love. According to Rabindranath, the love which is found in jīvan-devatā, is such that the heaven also tries to get it. The love found among the individual is the longing of the heaven. He maintains that God finds his expression in each and every individual. God is found in humanity. Brahman expresses His infinite love through the humanity. So Rabindranath utters that,

"Āmār māṣhe tomar īla habe
Tāito āmi esechi ci bhabe" 38

It means that Brahman acts (īla) on the individual being. He finds His expression as a true lover among the finite being. From this it appears that man’s appearance in this world is not illusory, not false. His existence is not wholly unreal, he is real like Brahman though in a limited sense. Hence in Tagore’s
philosophy there is felt an urge to retain the individuality which is the true expression of infinite love. He maintains that man is not a finite being, he is God himself (Jīvan Devatā). Tagore does not admit of one-sided love.

Brahman is love or bliss Himself, is the concept found in the philosophy of Malkani. He is the ultimate pleasure, so He is the Value Itself.

Tagore, on the other hand, maintains, "O thou lord of all heavens, where would be thy love if I were not?" Thus we find that without the individual being Brahman cannot realize His infinite love. Tagore does not accept the static bliss of Brahman.

Malkani does not accept this view. He maintains that, "If we accept this view, Brahman becomes subject to the vicissitudes of life and inertia, sleep and wakefulness, etc. In what sense can we say that He is the Eternal. We have once again slipped into the mistake of conceiving Brahman on the analogy of man. If it is conceded that Brahman in His being-aspect is eternal joy, a joy that cannot be added to, what can He possibly gain by joyful activity? The truth is that the moment Brahman acts or creates, He is bound to be controlled by those forces of ignorance or desire which determine activity and withdrawal of activity in man." According to Malkani the joy or love of Brahman is the purest love. It is not like the love of individual being. Because the love of the finite being is always mixed up with desires which is not the case with the purest love of Brahman. He argues there is ultimately no creation it is māyā-vāda, according to which all creation is illusory.

Rabindranath strongly opposes this view. He does not like to be disappointed by the world. He maintains that it is true that there is illusion, truth is often covered
by. But this does not imply their unreality. According to him $māyā$ is such that it helps to purify the truth. In Malkani’s philosophy $māyā$ is something which hides the truth and projects the unreal hence it has the negative force. In Tagore’s philosophy we find that $māyā$ helps to purify the real nature of a thing. “This is $māyā$, this is the art in creation, and art in literature, which is the magic of rhythm”\textsuperscript{41}

Tagore maintains that the would is not $māyā$. It is the $līlā$ of the lord. The bliss of Brahman which is the source of $ānanda$ is the source of creation. The basis of $līlā$ is $ānanda$ and its end is expression of the world.\textsuperscript{42}

He repeatedly said, ‘I exist’. Here I does not stand for the individual being. I means the universal man ($Bīśva-mānab$). According to him, ‘I’ who is the basis or source of all thoughts cannot be regarded as non-existent, non-qualified. In his book, ‘Saṅcaya’ he maintains that we are faced with two types of ‘I’. One is the individual or finite ‘I’ which is called by him as ‘small I’ and other is the universal man ($Bīśva-mānab$) called by him the big ‘I’. According to him these two I must be dealt in such a way that their distinction must be maintained yet they are to be united. The finite I must not be regarded as $māyic$ and the universal I as imagination.\textsuperscript{43} Both of them must be united keeping their individuality, otherwise both will be lost. And in this union we get the meaning of ‘my existence’. Tagore regards this as ‘mānasattā’ who is the $purnāsattā$ or Brahman.

Tagore, who is the worshipper of humanity does not agree to discard the existence of man. Because without the existence of man Brahman cannot express His infinite bliss.
Malkani like Śaṅkara regards the worldly existence as bondage because it is the false creation of māyā. Liberation, according to him means the complete cessation of the world and the Self.

Tagore differs from them. Tagore calls Brahman as universal man. Individual man is the expression of the Universal man. Hence to realize Brahman, individual man cannot be completely negated. Instead of liberation (mokṣa), Tagore uses the word freedom (mukti) to indicate release from the selfish, ignorant uncreated existence. Freedom means to manifest oneself in the variety of the world. He writes, “The ultimate end of freedom is also to know that “I am”. But it is the aberration of man’s consciousness from the separateness of the self into its unity with all.”

Thus it follows that like Śaṅkara, Malkani also uses the word māyā with much significance. It is only māyā, the inscrutable power of Brahman, that can establish the non-dualism of Advaita-Vedānta. Now, the concept of māyā is used by all the Vedāntic philosophers. But the concept of māyā in Malkani’s philosophy differs from those of many other contemporary philosophers. Malkani never uses the word māyā in the sense of līlā like Rabindranath and Aurobindo. As Malkani does not accept creation of the world as real, so māyā is not some kind of power of Brahman that helps Brahman to create this world. In his view Brahman is only real and the world of multiplicity is ultimately unreal. Hence the world is the creation of the indescribable and inscrutable māyā which ultimately vanishes with the rise of Brahmajñāna. Here the question necessarily arises that whether this Absolute Brahman can be personified. Is the Brahman the object of worship or God.
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22. Ibid., p. 104
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32. Vivekananda Swami, *Vedānta Philosophy*, p. 18

33. cf. Ananyananda Swami (Publisher), *Selection From the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 268

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39. Tagore Rabindranath, *Gitānjali* (English) Poem No. LVI, p. 37

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44. Tagore Rabindranath, *Personality*, p. 95.