

*Swami Krishnananda*

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

*A CRITICAL EXPOSITION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL  
PRINCIPLES IN EASTERN AND WESTERN  
PHILOSOPHY IN THE LIGHT OF THE  
DOCTRINES OF SWAMI SIVANANDA*

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The present publication meets a significant demand of seeking minds for a textbook on the metaphysics of a spiritual view of life, which goes into the heart of its questions and processes and supplies the needs of the contemplative as well as the practical side of an earnest search for Reality. This may well form an advanced study for those who have already had a grasp of the principles stated in the author's *Resurgent Culture*. The entire volume constitutes not only an incisive analysis but also a meditation of consciousness. The aim of the work is mainly to open up a rich treasure which is hidden beneath the culture of India and to make a contribution to an international understanding of the perennial values dear to all humanity. Knowledge in its essence is free from the barriers of space, time and personality, for it embodies rather a contemplation of the limitless profundities within man and the universe than a perception of the shifting scenes we call history. When process consummates itself in being, universal history realises its eternal meaning.

This treatise is a valuable guide to the student as well as the philosopher of life, a practical directive to seekers on the spiritual path along the lines of knowledge. The work is exclusively devoted to a discussion and exposition of the metaphysical side of philosophy and is intended to provide direct assistance in the higher reaches of one's spiritual quest.

—THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Shivanandanagar,

2nd July, 1992.

## PREFACE

It was my feeling that a proper approach to the subject of the higher analysis of life in the language of the modern mind is long overdue, and this work has to be undertaken earlier or later. Though a response to such a need has been attempted by many scholars, the result in most cases was such that it evoked either the intellectual or emotional side independently, and man was not touched in his being. One has to address human nature in its completeness and not merely a side of it. Physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, metaphysics and mysticism developed a tendency to specialisation and became almost water-tight compartments. This was indeed not a desirable state of affairs, for it encouraged a false division in what in fact is an indivisible unity. We cannot amputate the limb of a living body and then succeed by its study in an understanding of the true nature of the organism. A study of life is at once many-sided and, though a conclusive rational knowledge of it involves a study of things by their ultimate causes ranging beyond empirical observation, the purely logical method of philosophy, or the way of feeling which certain religious schools advocate, cannot be said independently to satisfy human aspiration, which always rises as a whole in its structure and not a part separated from its associates. To follow a system of thinking to its final limits would land one in a necessity to pay due attention to the laws of several strata and aspects of life. The seeker of Truth has a difficult task to perform, for he cannot affiliate himself to any particular branch of learning, while he cannot also ignore the manifold character of knowledge. With this end in

view, this adventure of presenting a treatise on the essential *Philosophy of Life* was undertaken.

The study in this volume has been comparative wherever necessary, and the thesis put forth is that in the teachings of Swami Sivananda a synthesis of the approach to life can be found, with a blending of the best in the different sections of life and pointing to a perfection which is integral. All quotations cited in this work are, unless otherwise stated, references from the writings of His Holiness Sri Swami Sivananda, intended either for comparison or substantiation of a thesis enunciated. After a statement on the meaning, value and methods of philosophy, and the need for it in human life, the work endeavours to make out that, though a scientific spirit is necessary in any study of philosophy, science cannot satisfy the vital urges in man. The main problem commences with the study of man himself, and in searching for the true man, we find the Atman, the highest principle of existence. While envisaging man as an individual, the problem of perception, or knowledge of the external world, comes out as a natural corollary. Right perception is a correct comprehension of fact. The composition of the universe which presents itself before perception becomes thereafter the subject of analysis. It has to be decided whether the universe is real in the same sense as it appears, or it has any other meaning. A recognition of the inadequacy of empirical experience in its various forms takes us to the heart of the study, viz., the nature of the Absolute—Brahman. But the Supreme Reality eludes the grasp of the

individual and compels attention as the universal Deity of creation—God, or *Isvara*.

The existence of *Isvara* implies at the same time the presence of *Jivas* who are subservient as His integral parts, though internally related in His self-identical universal consciousness. The question of the mutual relation of God, the world and the individual, is ultimately an empirical one and is overcome in the unitariness of the Absolute. Here we have a vision of perfection in its various phases. Spiritual life is meditation on Reality.

As it has been rather customary nowadays to entertain a comparative outlook in philosophy, the views of several Western thinkers are also taken into consideration in our judgment of values. The work presents a critical estimate of some of the prominent modern philosophers of the West, pointing out how the universal philosophy of India agrees or disagrees with them, and how this philosophy is a union of reason and intuition. The vocation of philosophy has been said to trace the presence and the organic movement or process of Reason in Nature, in the human mind, in all social institutions, in the history of nations, and in the progressive advancement of the world. This would mean that philosophy is the rationality behind science, psychology, sociology, ethics, politics, law and world-history, in addition to its function of determining the significance of art and religion. A comprehensive philosophy should therefore be able to explain the ultimate *rationale* of these branches of knowledge having sway over the different fields of life. Hegel in the West tried to exalt philosophy to this status and to view life as a movement of

Reason. This is indeed a praiseworthy attempt of a pioneer, but it had its defects characteristic of inadequate information and a meagre sense of the implications of a universal approach to the problems of life. He lacked the insight which discovered that Truth cannot be encountered in one form alone, for it has at least three degrees of manifestation—the absolute, the empirical and the apparent. The various questions may have to be answered from these different levels of judgement; else, the square rod might find itself in a round hole.

A philosophy of life has naturally to be inseparable from universality of vision. It has therefore to start from a study of the most basic fact of human perception, viz. Nature in all its externality. The astronomical universe, with its mathematical laws, may be regarded as the extreme content of the extroverted consciousness. Things hang loosely in this scheme with apparently no connection with one another, except perhaps the pull of gravitation and a distant influence characteristic of physical bodies. It is physics which goes deeper into the structure and content of this diversified universe and discovers electro-magnetic fields determining the nature and function of bodies and a closer relation among them than crass perception would permit. The physical laws working behind the universe seem to be uniform and the substance of things is seen ultimately to consist not of scattered particulars but a single force or energy permeating and constituting everything. The 'locality' of bodies fades and they coalesce and fuse into one another in an underlying universal continuum. Chemistry busies itself with the reactions that substances

set up in their combinations as elements capable of mutual relationship in their physical ambit.

But life is not explained either by mathematics, physics or chemistry. Living beings are different from mere bodies or substances even intimately related. The life-principle is not easily capable of definition and eludes determination in physical terms. Growth and evolution and, above all, a kind of self-competency which asserts itself in every living body are specialities by themselves. Organic life raises quite a different question from the principles governing inorganic things. Biology is the study of life and points to the existence of a thinking faculty in certain living beings, which lies beyond its scope and concerns the science of psychology. The Behaviourist, Gestalt, Hormic and other theories of the psyche are only attempts at understanding that peculiar expression of consciousness which ramifies itself into what are familiarly known as thought, feeling, volition, discrimination, memory, self-affirmation, etc. A classification made among these faculties has differentiated man from animal, the former being endowed with the power of logical decision which is wanting in the lower stages. The functional modes of the human psyche are various and have led to the studies made in the field of psycho-analysis, which analyses the urges, needs and aspirations of the psychological constitution both in its progressive and retrogressive processes of activity.

Man's relation to other men occasions the study known as sociology. Human relationships and their requirements form an important branch of investigation, which may also go into the details of anthropology. This situation leads to

the more complex relations of political institutions necessitated by the circumstances of group living and the interests of communities into which people form themselves. Human conduct, which has to be regulated by mutual consent, outer pressure or a moral sense predominant in some, gives rise to the system of ethics. The ethical and political rules of groups of mankind crystallise into the laws of countries or nations. The legal codes have also to consider the implications of the march of world-history which exhibits a logical trend in all its indeterminable movements, hinting at the operation of the universal laws transcending humanity and yet immanent in it at all times.

It is with this preamble that philosophy has to commence the working out of its purpose. Human enterprises do not generally extend to the universal; they have always parochial objectives and even philosophy has latterly been forced to narrow itself to the confines of psychological urges and social exigencies. There have been many 'philosophies' of subjects or approaches rather than a true philosophy wide enough to embrace the living principles animating all branches of human knowledge. Humanity's longing has been not so much for the branches of learning or the constitution of social institutions as for an inner peace and a satisfaction that the goal has been reached. The meanderings of the mind in the fields of external research have not brought the desired result, and man is today almost what he was centuries before. The reason is an obvious misapprehension of what is good and an application of the wrong means in the attempt at gaining

the end. A mere study of the philosophical thoughts of the great thinkers in the manner of a history will not suffice. Philosophy in its core is not simply the teachings of the many schools, but a vital content of consciousness in its generality.

In the exposition, I have always attempted a middle course between looseness and terseness of expression, bearing in mind that the presentation has to be precise and yet not involve too difficult a reading. The conciseness ventured has necessitated packing of several thoughts into a lesser number of suggestive sentences than would be expected by a student. Though the work demands some previous acquaintance with philosophical thinking, there should be no doubt that the sincere aspirant will be immensely benefited thereby to not a small extent.

—SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



# **PART I – THE FOUNDATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY**

## **CHAPTER I: THE DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **The Fundamental Science**

Philosophy is a well coordinated and systematised attempt at evaluating life and the universe as a whole, with reference to first principles that underlie all things as their causes and are implicit in all experience. It is an impartial approach to all problems and aspects of life and existence, and its studies are not devoted merely to the empirical world, as in the case of the physical and biological sciences; not restricted to the provinces of faith and authority or to the questions of the other world, as is the case with theological disquisitions; not confined to investigation of the mind and its behaviour, as in psychology; not given over merely to casuistry and ethology, as in the normative science of morality and ethics; not taken up with the consideration of civic duties and problems of administration and constitution, as in the case of politics; not concerned with the solution of problems and techniques of adjusting and ordering and discovering the origin and organisation and development of human society, like economics and sociology; but are adapted for an exhaustive treatment of the basic presuppositions of each and every one of these, as also of what is other than and beyond all these, that on which all these are ultimately founded and which is the ground of all knowledge and experience in general. Philosophy investigates the very possibility and conditions of knowledge, its extent, nature and value. It bases itself on facts already known and rises above them to absolute verities, on which all phenomena

depend and by which alone they can be rationally explained. It is not circumscribed by the limitations of the past, present and future, by the laws of this place or that country, but refers to all times, places and conditions. Philosophy is the most inclusive of all branches of learning, and acts as a touchstone to all other aspects of human knowledge.

Philosophy is a rational enquiry into the forms, contents and implications of experience. It is an attempt at a complete knowledge of being in all the phases of its manifestation in the various processes of consciousness. The discovery of the ultimate meaning and essence of existence is the central purpose of philosophy. It is the art of the perfect life, the science of reality, the foundation of the practice of righteousness, the law of the attainment of freedom and bliss, and provides a key to the meaning and appreciation of beauty. Swami Sivananda holds philosophy to be the Vedanta or the consummation of knowledge, Brahma-vidya, or the sacred lore of the Eternal, which is inseparable from Yogasastra, or the methodology of the ascent of the finite to the infinite. It is the way to the knowledge of being as such, of that which is. "Philosophy is love of wisdom, or striving for wisdom. It is a moral and intellectual science which tries to explain the reality behind appearances by reducing the phenomena of the universe to ultimate causes, through the application of reason and law" (*Questions and Answers*, p.94). Philosophy has its goal in the highest generalisation conceivable, and this consists in the final grasping of the deepest meaning of existence taken as a whole. Philosophy is no doubt the grand artistic edifice

constructed by the higher purified intellect of man, but to Swami Sivananda, it is not merely this, for, according to him, it is based on intuition and is meant to justify rationally one's faith in Truth. Philosophical knowledge in the true sense of the term cannot be had through sense-experience, for, the latter is confined to appearances. Thus, many of the schools of Western philosophy would be excluded from Swami Sivananda's definition of philosophy. The architect of the monumental mansions of philosophy is not merely the abstract and unaided intellect, but the intellect free from all desires, purged of all prejudices, and based on immediate intuition. Hegel says in his *Philosophy of Religion*: "Philosophy is not a wisdom of the world, but is knowledge of what is not of the world; it is not knowledge which concerns external mass or empirical existence and life, but is knowledge of that which is eternal, of what God is, and what flows out of His nature."

Swami Sivananda would agree with Hegel in holding that the supreme purpose of philosophy is not circumscribed by the contents of empirical experience but extends to the final and uncontradicted attainment of the Absolute. "Philosophy is the expression of the inner urge to know the Atman. It is the science of principles. It is the way, not simply of explaining what ought to be, but of directly experiencing that which eternally exists" (*Voice of Sivananda*, pp.2,3). Philosophy never rests contented until the permanent acquisition of non-stultified knowledge. The test of reality is non-contradiction, and philosophy is the pursuit of reality. It is spiritual realisation expressed in logical language, while passing through the mill of reason.

Reason in the philosophy of Swami Sivananda is only a handmaid to the higher intuition, made use of to proclaim the truth and value of intuition in the world of sense-perception. It means that a purely intellectual philosophy can never discover reality, for, this discovery is possible only through super-sensory intuition or *Sakshatkara*. It is never possible to produce a perfect philosophy through the instrumentality of reason alone, for, unbridled reason can easily carry consciousness away from Truth. Reason rests on the awareness of duality, on the concept of the dichotomy of existence, and Truth is non-duality. Thus, there is no similarity between the characteristics of reason and the nature of Reality. Philosophy does not pretend to give us Truth as it is, but is capable of intimating to us the existence of a super-sensible being which presses itself forward in each and every one of our experiences as their sole value, essence and justification, as the highest consummation and beatitude of all individuals in the universe. John Dewey almost hits the mark when he holds that a catholic and far-sighted theory of the adjustment of the conflicting factors of life is philosophy.

Philosophy is a necessary means for the possession of the higher knowledge of the Self. But, if it is defined as process of the function of the intellect, we have to note that it is not always the sole means; for philosophy in Swami Sivananda, as in Plato, Plotinus and Spinoza, makes its appeal not merely to the intellect of man, but to the heart and the feeling as well. It is not enough to understand the teachings of philosophy, it is necessary also to feel them in the depths of one's heart. Feeling, at least in certain

respects, surpasses understanding, albeit that feeling is often strengthened by understanding. Philosophy is an intensely practical science. "Philosophy has its roots in the practical needs of man. Man wants to know about transcendental matters when he is in a reflective state. There is an urge within him to know about the secret of death, the secret of immortality, the nature of the soul, the creator and the world." "Philosophy is the self-expression of the growing spirit in man. Philosophers are its voice" (*Philosophy and Teachings*, p.1). The Vedanta is the general term applied in India to such a philosophy of wise adjustment of value based on an undeluded perception of Reality. "One must be a practical Vedantin. Mere theorising and lecturing is only intellectual gymnastics. This will not suffice. If the Vedanta, is not practicable, no theory is of any value. One must put the Vedanta into daily practice, in every action that one does. The Vedanta teaches the oneness or unity of the Self. One must radiate love to one and all. The spirit of the Vedanta must be ingrained in one's cells or tissues, veins, nerves and bones. It must become part and parcel of one's nature. One must think of unity, speak of unity, and act in unity" (*Lectures on Yoga and Vedanta* p.134). Philosophy in this sense ought to become the principal occupation of enlightened life. All other pursuits of man should stem from the force of this essential vocation of human intelligence.

Philosophy is a general exposition of the ultimate concepts, meanings and values of the things of the universe, by a resort to their final causes which range beyond the reach of the senses. It becomes possible for philosophy to

concern itself with metaphysical essences by resting on the strong foundation of the testimony given by sages to deep meditation and realisation. Hence the source as well as the aim of philosophy is direct experience, non-mediate, supersensory and super-logical. All knowledge that we ordinarily obtain in this world is mediate, for it requires the operation of the triune process of the knower, knowledge and the known. By this method of knowing it is not possible for us to acquire an unshakable knowledge of reality, for mediacy in knowledge does not enjoy the characteristics of permanency. The transitory nature of mediate knowledge affects the whole world of science, for this latter is sense-bound. There are certain hypothetical conceptions and principles which are absolutely necessary for obtaining scientific knowledge, using the word science in the sense in which it is understood by scientists today, and these are the notions and concepts of the existence of an extended space, of a flowing time and of the presence of material objects outside consciousness. In other words, science is a coordinated and systematised knowledge of the contents of the world as it is observed through the physical senses of man. We need not point out here that science lays too much trust in the validity of sense-perception and thus gets vitiated by the gross limitations to which the senses are obviously subject.

Philosophy soars above empiricity, though it takes the help of empirical concepts and categories for the sake of proclaiming to the world the truths declared by intuition. It speaks to the world in the language of the world, for the language of intuition is unintelligible to the world of

experience. The form and shape of philosophy has necessarily to depend on the stuff out of which the world of experience is made, on account of its having to perform the function of transmitting the knowledge of the supermundane ideal to the realm of mundane values. It has always within itself a living undercurrent of significance and implication which gives a vivid picture of the nature of the ultimate end to the understanding mind. Philosophy stands on the shoulders of the senses, but looks beyond them. Intuition is the soul of philosophy, and reason its body. By intuition, again, we do not mean the sensory intuition of certain Western philosophers, but the integral intuition of Consciousness, which is non-different from the Absolute. The world is based on the Absolute; it is a manifestation of the Absolute. It is the Absolute flowing and moving that appears to the senses as the world. Philosophy gives us a promise of such a majestic vision. Hence we can say, with Aristotle, it is the Fundamental Science.

### **The Metaphysics of Reality**

Swami Sivananda differs from Hegel's conception of philosophy as the work of the unifying Reason. Though Hegel's Reason has its function in the unification of the categories, its goal is abstract, an Idea. To Swami Sivananda knowledge of Reality is not an Idea, but an immediate realisation of the Eternal Presence, which is consciousness and bliss in one. The Absolute is necessary for the world, but the world is not necessary for the Absolute. Undifferentiatedness and transcendence of qualities do not

in any way mean reducing Reality to non-being. Here is the gulf between Hegel and Swami Sivananda. Though what is true in the world is the Absolute alone, the names and the forms of the world are not in the latter. Swami Sivananda carefully distinguishes between the gross concept of the world that the common man has in his mind and the true concept of it that the purified, analytic mind of an aspirant after Truth ought to have. The world, in his philosophy, is only a conglomeration of isolated and abstract names and forms, which, when they are thus isolated, lose all reality. The ordinary untrained mind confuses what is the permanent element in what we call the world with the abstract appearances, which are merely accidental to it. This confusion is to be found even in Hegel who, not carefully distinguishing between the eternal and the transitory characters present in the world, thinks that the existence of the world is necessary for the perfection of the Absolute. In Swami Sivananda's philosophy, the world consists of merely the names and forms of experience and not what puts on these names and forms. It is wrong to think that the world is concrete and the Absolute abstract. The truth is that the reverse is the case. The difficulty arises due to a false appreciation of the true relation of Reality to appearance. "A clear understanding of man's relation to God is a matter of momentous importance to students of philosophy and to all aspirants" (*Philosophy and Teachings*, p.2). In the Absolute, all the physical, mental, moral, aesthetic and spiritual aspirations of individuals find their true consummation, and hence it cannot be an abstract Idea. The world is relative to perception and its goal is the



Absolute. What the senses perceive is but the outer changing mode of the fact of the relativity of experience. On a careful analysis of the nature of the world it is found to fade away into nothingness until only consciousness remains. Eddington, the well-known scientist, remarks that the scientists have chased the solid substance from the continuous liquid to the atom, from the atom to the electron, and there they have lost it.

Matter has now ceased to be what it was to man half a century ago, and today it is more like a myth, a fable or a fancy than reality. But in spite of the repudiation of the solid reality and sensibility of the material world by the discoveries of modern science, an irrefutable and persistent feeling of reality lingers in the mind of everyone. What science has abrogated is not reality but appearance, and after everything is said, there remains the irreducible minimum of the consciousness of the Self. The Self, however, is beyond the province of science, and the scientist who has reached the boundaries of his knowledge and discovered the limitations of reason and observation is likely to be forced to accept its reality. This is actually what has happened, and great scientists like Max Planck, Einstein, James Jeans and Eddington have given intimations of that something that science is not able to say anything about. Physics is perforce landed in metaphysics. Here we become alive to the supreme function of philosophy, which declares that the super-sensuous basis of matter and energy, space, time and gravitation is the secondless Absolute.

## **The Concept of Intuitional Basis**

Swami Sivananda accepts that our perceptions and percepts are governed by the characters of our sensibility and understanding. What we are greatly affects our ways of knowing. But on this ground he would not agree with Kant that philosophical pursuits should be given up altogether as specimens of a vain enterprise on the part of man. Kant, concerning himself too much with the individual powers of knowledge, dispenses with the metaphysics of an ultimate reality as something totally impossible. Kant's contention is that, as knowledge is limited to the perceptual categories of the sensibility and the conceptual categories of the understanding, even our knowledge of God as such, for example, is not a possibility. Yes, we cannot have a satisfactory metaphysics of reality if reason is our sole aid, for, it is true that all our knowledge is empirical and limited, being confined to the categories of the sensibility and understanding, from which no one, ordinarily, can extricate himself. But this problem does not arise in the philosophy of Swami Sivananda, for, to him, philosophy is but the embodiment in reason of the intuitional wisdom of Truth as it is. The Absolute is not the one that is coloured by the functions of the senses and the understanding, but the very presupposition of the senses, understanding and reason. It has to be emphasised again that philosophy is not the achievement of the unaided reason walking independently of the non-dualistic intuition, but is only the rational articulation of the super-rational realised in integral intuition. God, freedom and immortality are not objects of the reason, which reason has to establish

independently, but represent the highest goal which reason has to justify, basing itself on the *Anubhava* or experience of the sages, such as those of the Upanishads. To Kant, metaphysical realities are only regulative principles or ideals of reason that have to be postulated, but cannot be justified by reason. To Swami Sivananda, this is so only when Reality is bifurcated into the objects of reason and of intuition and not taken as one whole. When reason draws inspiration from non-sensory experience and breathes the air of intuition, what it declares is not merely a regulative principle but the representation of what is real in the highest sense.

The Reality that is established in philosophy is to be experienced in the state of deep meditation. Here consciousness and being become one. There is no way of entering into communion with it except by being it. There is no such thing as subject-object relationship in regard to the consciousness of what is universal. Either one knows it fully in non-dualistic communion or does not know it at all. The senses, the understanding and the reason are powerless instruments in one's attempt at perfectly comprehending its nature or realising it in experience. In the realisation of the Supreme Being the mind of the individual is completely transcended, together with all its dualistic categories. The mind does not partake of the characteristics of Reality. It is not conscious and also not universal in nature. The mind is a feeble objective insentient evolute acting as the individual's instrument in the perception of the external world, which is physical in nature. By its very nature it knows only what is outside it and cannot know what is

above it or what is presupposed by it. Hence nothing that is known to the human being in this empirical world can be of any use in the realm of the trans-empirical Consciousness. The objects of the senses get fused, as it were, in the constitutive essence of the Absolute. Space, time and causation, matter, energy and objects vanish in the menstruum of its stupendous existence. The Absolute of philosophy is not an object of consciousness, but is what consciousness itself is in its real and essential nature. Thus philosophy is the pathway to the realisation of the Absolute Consciousness through the ladder of the different stages of the relative consciousness.

### **Rational Presentation of Experience**

Philosophy is not to be confused with intuition, with mystic or religious experience, though it is a very powerful aid in achieving this end. Philosophy in India is based on the revelations of the sages and provides the necessary strength to the future generation of mankind for realising this goal. In mystic or religious experience the intellect and the reason are completely transcended, while philosophy is all intellect and reason, though it is grounded ultimately in deep religious experience. While the intuitional truths are rationally explained by philosophy, it does not pretend to prove the nature of these truths through intellectual or scientific categories. Philosophy has a purely negative value—of offering an exhaustive criticism of sense-experience and logical thought and indirectly arriving at the concept of Reality by demonstrating the limitations and inadequacies of the former. All philosophy really springs

from an inward dissatisfaction with immediate empirical experience consequent upon the perception of the inadequacies inherent in its very nature. This leads to a critical examination of the constituents of empirical experience and a profound study of its hidden implications. This is philosophy. A justification of the super-mental and non-temporal Absolute is attempted through a searching analysis and understanding of sense-experience and rational judgment, while the defects and implications of the latter are fully disclosed. Truly speaking, philosophy can neither be purely subjective in its approach, nor purely objective in the sense of an alienation from the perceiving subject. It will be seen in the course of the study of the principles constituting the universe that what is implied within in experience is also implied outside in the contents of experience and in the objects and the conditions that are necessary for bringing about this experience. Thus philosophy becomes a universal approach to Truth made by the subject and the object simultaneously with equal authority, meaning and strength, making no difference in value between themselves. The movement of thought is from the physical to the biological, from the biological to the logical, and from the logical to the spiritual. Philosophy should, therefore, constitute a comprehensive analysis and study of the whole of experience. It has no partialities, no prejudices, no preconceptions, no likes, no dislikes. It marches bold like a heroic warrior with truth, justice and wisdom as its supreme aims. It makes ample use of all the powers that the human individual is endowed with and reaches the farthest limit of these powers, where what it

observes and studies is not that which is immediately experienced, but what is inferred from and logically implied in the facts it envisages directly in that borderland between understanding and reason. Man possesses nothing superior to reason, and so philosophy cannot go beyond it. In a way philosophy is a rational criticism of reason itself, when we take reason to mean not merely an isolated abstract power of intelligence, but also all the objective factors and conditions that are necessary to make it what it is. When reason rationally knows its own limitations and also the reason why it is limited, it knows Reality in a negative way. This negative knowledge becomes the starting point of the effort towards its positive realisation in meditation and communion.

Philosophy has no quarrel with science; it concedes that science is necessary and useful in reinforcing its own conclusions, but it strictly warns science that it is limited to physical phenomena. We study the physical, chemical and biological laws in science, the logical and metaphysical principles in philosophy and the moral and the spiritual verities in religion and the higher mysticism. The senses, reason and intuition are our ways of knowledge in the progressive unfoldment of our nature. Science, philosophy and mysticism are true and useful in their own places and together constitute the highroad to a knowledge of life as a whole. Intuition, however, has the special advantage of being able to unfold all that the senses and reason can, and, in addition, also that which these cannot hope to know with all their power. The philosophy of Swami Sivananda is not any partial approach to Truth; it is that grand integral

method which combines in itself the principles and laws discovered and established by science, metaphysics and the higher religion and which embraces in its vast bosom whatever is true, good or beautiful in the universe. What he says of the Vedanta is true of all genuine philosophy aiming at the salvation of the human soul: "Vedanta is that bold philosophy which teaches the unity of life or the oneness of consciousness." "It is that sublime philosophy which elevates the mind at once to the magnificent heights of Brahman-hood, divine splendour and glory, which makes man absolutely fearless, which destroys all barriers that separate man from man and which brings concord, unruffled peace and harmony to suffering humanity." "It is the only philosophy that, when properly understood and practised, can put a definite stop to world wars and all dissensions, splits and skirmishes that exist in different nations and communities." "Vedanta is a magnetic healing balm for the wounded and the afflicted in the dreadful battlefield of this dire mundane existence. Vedanta is the divine collyrium which removes the cataract of ignorance and gives a new inner eye of intuition or wisdom." "It gives real inner spiritual strength. It inspires, renovates, vivifies, invigorates and puts a stop to the never-ending wheel of birth and death and confers immortality, infinite knowledge and bliss" (*Vedanta in Daily Life*, pp.3-4). To Plato, philosophy is the dear delight, and the philosopher is the spectator of all time and all existence, and is one who sets his affections on that which really exists. For Spinoza, it is the perception of things *sub specie eternitatis*.

## Classification of Themes

Philosophy conceived as *metaphysics* deals with an extensive reasoned discussion of the natures and the relations of God, world and the individual soul. The latter two are either identical in essence with God, or are attributes or parts of God, or are different from God. The ultimate Reality is either God, or the world of perception alone, or only the individual mind. God either exists or not, and is necessary or unnecessary for an explanation of experience. The world is either material or mental in nature; and consciousness is independent of or is dependent on matter. The world is either pluralistic or a single whole; and is real, ideal or unreal, empirical, pragmatic or rational. The individual is either free or bound. Questions of this nature are usually discussed under metaphysics. It also delineates the process of cosmogony and cosmology, the concepts of space, time and causation, creation, evolution and involution, as well as the presuppositions of eschatology or the discourse on the nature of life after death. The philosophical basis of modern physics and biology also can be comprised under metaphysics. Under *epistemology* the various theories and processes of the acquisition of right knowledge, as well as the nature and possibility of wrong knowledge, are discussed in detail. Sensation, perception, inference, comparison, verbal testimony, presumption, non-apprehension and non-relational intuition are the various phases of the ways of right knowledge. Intuition, however, is not to be classed as one of the ways of knowing, for it is the one supreme way of right knowledge, transcending all



other empirical means. Knowledge is said to be erroneous when one thing is mistaken for another, whatever the reason be for this error. The several causes of error in perception are also discussed under epistemology. Under *aesthetics* the significance and the nature of beauty are discussed in philosophy. Beauty is either subjective or objective or relative to the subject and the object. It, again, is either real, ideal or unreal. As *ethics* philosophy engages itself in the ascertainment of the nature of right and wrong, good and bad. It deals with the nature of moral standards and moral judgments, the rights and the duties of the individual, the society and the state, the national and international good, the nature and function of conscience, and the like. Ethics is either naturalistic, hedonistic or metaphysical. Under *psychology* the constitution, function and behaviour of the mind is discussed in philosophy. Psychology, apart from its dealing with general topics, such as the springs of action, thought, intelligence, emotion, will, feeling, the relation of mind and body, the nature of internal conflict, the mechanism of sense-knowledge, etc., may be distinguished as individual, social, educational, religious, analytic and group psychology. There has been a tendency in recent times to segregate psychology, as a purely objective science, from philosophical studies that are not confined merely to the region of observation. Under *axiology* philosophy establishes the nature of values in the different stages and views of life, such as physical values, aesthetic values, moral values, religious values, etc. *Mysticism* is in a way the most magnificent part of philosophical studies, though certain rationalist

philosophers, in their enthusiasm to save themselves from falling into irrationalism of any kind, commit the error of not knowing that true mysticism deals with truths that range beyond and determine all rational processes of knowledge. Mysticism mostly concerns itself with the inner relation of the individual to the Eternal Being and with the various techniques of the ascent of the soul in the fulfilment of its religious and spiritual aspirations, with the picturesque experiences it undergoes and the dangers and the difficulties it has to encounter on the way, with the psychology of the phenomenon of religious consciousness and the philosophical foundations and implications of the inner path of the Spirit, and also the meditations which the seeker of Truth has to practise for the ultimate attainment. The Vedanta and the Yoga are perfected and finished systems which comprise all these branches of study, and so deserve in every sense of the term the designation of philosophy. Swami Sivananda has recorded in his works his unequivocal conclusions on these wondrous themes, which point in the end to the self-realisation of consciousness in the Absolute.

Though philosophy, in the system of Swami Sivananda, is mostly understood in the sense of metaphysics, ethics and mysticism, its other phases also receive in his writings due consideration, and are placed in a respectable position as honourable scions of the majestic metaphysics of his Vedanta. For him the basis of all knowledge is the existence of the Absolute Self, and perception and the other ways of knowing are meaningful on account of their being illumined by the light of this Self. Epistemological problems

are, therefore, in the end, problems of the nature and the manner of the manifestation of the Absolute through the psycho-physical organism. Beauty is the vision of the Absolute through the senses and the understanding. The main material of beauty is symmetry, rhythm, harmony, equilibrium, unity, manifest in consciousness. The perception of these characteristics is the neutralisation of want and one-sidedness in consciousness, the fulfilment of personality, the completion of being, and hence a manifestation of the Absolute, in some degree, in one's consciousness. The aesthetic consciousness is thus the result of a partial expression of the universal in conscious experience. The good is that which, directly or indirectly, leads the individual to the experience of the Absolute, which is the ultimate good. Primary virtues are those which are directly concerned with the conscious movement of the finite to the Infinite, and the secondary ones are those indirectly responsible for this attainment. The way of the good is the direction of the right. Ethics is the science of the inner conduct that is good and right. The psychological principles, to Swami Sivananda, are but certain of the several stages and functional points of the appearance of the Absolute in the evolutionary process of the external subtle universe existing behind the gross mass of the five elements. Psychology is thus one of the most interesting and essential of sciences, inasmuch as it investigates and studies the nature of the operations and behaviour of the mind, which is the medium, in the realm of relativity, of the perception of the Absolute. All values, intrinsic or extrinsic, are rooted in the judgment of the supreme value of the

realisation of the Absolute, which is the eternal home of all other values and in which all other values find their fulfilment. Axiology has to be referred back to metaphysical studies. Mysticism, for Swami Sivananda, is the path of the practical knowledge and experience of the great truths of metaphysics, the disclosure of the realities of God, the world and the individual, the recognition, in direct intuition, of their true relations, the grand rising of the soul from the slumber of ignorance and its realisation of the beatitude of the Absolute. The several techniques of Yoga and Jnana are comprehended in mysticism of the right type, and it sums up what is usually known as the spiritual path or the way to the Life Divine. Philosophy is a term generally applied to a study of all these aspects of life's meaning, and so it forms the most attractive pursuit of the human being in general.

## **CHAPTER II: THE VALUE OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **The Need for a Theory of Life**

Philosophy is generally defined as love of wisdom or the knowledge of things in general by their ultimate causes, so far as reason can attain to such knowledge. It is a comprehensive and critical study and analysis of experience as a whole. Whether it is consciously, deliberately and rationally adopted on conviction or consciously or unconsciously followed in life through faith or persuasion, every man constructs for himself a fundamental philosophy as the basis of life, a theory of the relation of the world and the individual, and this shapes his whole attitude to life. Aristotle called metaphysics the fundamental science, for, a correct comprehension of it is enough to give man a complete knowledge of every constituent or content of human experience. All persons live in accordance with the philosophy of life that they have framed for themselves, consciously or unconsciously. Even the uneducated and the uncultured have a rough and ready philosophy of their own. Life without a philosophy is unimaginable. It is only when we confine the concept of philosophy to the laboured edifices of academic men that we are inclined to think that only a few in the world have any philosophy, or study or understand it. Even those who hold that there is no need of any philosophy have a secret philosophy of their own. They have a theory of reality, though it may consist only in denying it altogether. They have a theory of the world, though it may be only one of crass material perception, or of a superstitious belief in the supremacy of the personalities and forces of myth and fable. We have an

ethics, an epistemology and even a logic of our own, though it may be purely personal or limited to a certain group of persons of kindred ideas and temperaments. Under these conditions, it is certainly advisable for us to frame a systematic and intelligent philosophy for our life, after critically examining and understanding the nature of the world and our experiences in it, at least so far as it is possible for the powers that we are endowed with. And if we consistently carry our sincere efforts, with critical intelligence, to their logical limits, we will find that philosophies are not pet theories or private affairs of different individuals, but from a science and an art of human life taken into completeness. We would then arrive at a philosophy, not of this or that school, but of humanity in general. We would reach a most catholic and flexible theory of the universe and its contents, acceptable to all men of reason, a universal philosophy based on experiences that are common to all persons. Difficulties and problems, however, arise only because of our definitions of experience or of the limits we set to it. We may limit philosophy to sense-experience, to understanding, to reason or to intuition. Finally it is only intuition that enjoys the greatest universality of scope and dives deepest into the mysteries of existence. A perfect philosophy ought therefore to be one springing from an intuition of Reality.

John Dewey describes the constitution of philosophy as expressing a certain attitude, purpose, and temper of conjoint intellect and will, rather than a discipline whose boundaries can be neatly marked off. The Indian sage would, however, add intuition as forming the foundation of

the functions of the intellect and will, which usually work with the material supplied by the senses.

Philosophy is a complete world-view, a *Weltanschauung*, a general attitude of intellect, will and feeling, to life. It gives an explanation of the universe at large, by appeal to what is discoverable as the deepest of known facts. It is not a mere description of the details or bits of physical observation. We call an explanation philosophical when it is broad enough to be harmoniously related to the other views of life and fulfils the needs of all the faculties of man to the highest degree of satisfaction, using ultimate principles, and not mere empirical facts, in establishing its validity.

“Philosophy, indeed, in one sense of the term, is only a compendious name for the spirit in education,” says William James. It is only in this sense of the process of the education and unfoldment of the spiritual spark in man that philosophy is worth its name. To teach a doctrine in a dogmatic and forced way is one thing, and to do it in a rational and appealing way in its greatest fullness is another. The latter is the task and the way of philosophy. Its value in imparting true culture to man, to make him wise and useful both to himself and to others is inestimable. Philosophy wakes us from our ‘dogmatic slumber’ and makes us critical in our outlook, opening before our eyes huge vistas of the majesty and reality of the unknown, giving us strength to stand firm on our own legs and to assert our rightful citizenship of the universe. Our whims, fancies and prejudices are broken, and philosophy makes us free and catholic in our attitudes. The philosopher is raised

above the usual clinging to immediate practical needs and is enabled to roam fearlessly in the empyrean of the joy springing from within. This is the privilege of the true philosopher who gains access to Reality, and it is not available to those who are sunk in earthliness, bound by material urges and content with what they see with their physical eyes.

### **Science and Philosophy**

It is often said that philosophy is not as useful as science, that science has made much progress and that philosophy is lagging behind, that science has its great utility, while philosophy has none. This complaint comes mostly from partial observers of the strides of science in making inventions of instruments that save us labour and time and thus make for comfort in our daily life. But, this, of which man boasts so much, is applied science, and not science, as such. When we find man at a loss to know how to use the leisure provided to him by applied science, and how to find time to do what is really solacing to him in his life, where and of what use, we ask, is the great advance that science has made in knowledge, with all its herculean efforts. What about the morality of man today, and what civilisation and culture is he endowed with? Where comes the pride of mere applied science when selfishness, greed and jealousy are its masters, when it threatens to make an end of man himself, and when it tightens the knot that binds man to the prison-house of misery raised by himself on the basis of belief in things that only tantalise him and then perish? Man has applied science, but not philosophy,



for his life. And even where science is applied, it is done in the manner of giving a sword in the hands of a child or of a person shorn of sanity. Philosophy has really made more progress than science, trying to save man from the folly of ignorance and misconduct, raising him from the state of the animal man and blessing him with the light o love, service and sacrifice and making him aware of the need for the dedication of the self to a purpose lifted above all human needs. The riches of science, bereft of the wisdom of philosophy, become pernicious possessions, to be dreaded rather than loved and adored. What advantage can one reap from scientific inventions without moral, economic, political and administrative wisdom, without the blessedness of a peaceful and happy life that embraces the universe as its loving friend, nay, its very self? Let not man pride himself over the advance of science; it has only invented tools without giving man the knowledge to use them in the right way; these tools become dreadful monsters when there is none to direct them with sagacity.

Science can describe the *how* of fragments of sense-observation; but it is impotent to interpret and explain the meaning and value of what is thus observed—the *why* of visible phenomena. Philosophy is not dry intellectual gymnastics; it is the wisdom of life reached after careful reflection and investigation, without which life is but a dismal failure. It was Socrates who said that those who lack right knowledge deserve to be stigmatised as slaves. And Plato was emphatic when he pronounced the truth that, unless philosophers become kings or the existing kings acquire the genuine wisdom of philosophy, unless political

power and philosophy are combined in the same person, there will be no deliverance for cities, nor yet for the human race. Plato here declares an eternal truth, a truth which holds good for all times and climes; administrators should first and foremost be philosophers, not merely lovers but possessors of wisdom.

The renowned scientist, Sir Arthur Eddington, says that our true personality and consciousness are not parts of observed phenomena but belong to the background of phenomena. According to him, our deeper feelings are not of ourselves alone, but are glimpses of a reality transcending the narrow limits of one particular consciousness. The stuff of the world, to him, is finally a limitless mind or consciousness. We know a particular world because it is that alone with which the consciousness interacts. He gives matter, in the end, the character of 'knowability,' and regards it as grafted on a spiritual substratum. Reality is fundamentally spiritual, is *general consciousness*. And he further makes the discovery that, where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from Nature that which the mind has put into Nature. Here, Eddington obviously rises from physics and enters the realm of philosophy and mysticism. This is what all men of deep reflective thinking are in the end obliged to do. Whitehead would receive nothing into the physical scheme that is not discoverable as an element in subjective experience. He feels that the poets are entirely mistaken and that they should address their lyrics to themselves and congratulate themselves on the excellency of the human mind. Sir James Jeans uses Plato's simile and says that

science is studying merely a reflection on the walls of the cave of a play that is being shown outside in sunlight. The substantiality as well as the objectivity of things is due to their subsistence in the mind of an eternal Spirit. To Bertrand Russell, mind and matter alike are logical constructions, and the distinction between the psychical and the physical is not fundamental. The difference between mind and matter is not in their substance but in their arrangement. Max Planck does not think that consciousness can be explained in terms of matter and its laws. He regards consciousness as fundamental and matter as a derivative of consciousness. Einstein reverently contemplates the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity and is content to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the intelligence manifested in Nature. R. A. Millikan says that a purely materialistic philosophy is the height of unintelligence. And finally we have Eddington, again, accepting that the absence of the faculty of an intuitive perception of the divine presence is a kind of mental deficiency. It is enough if we observe here that the great geniuses of science have felt the need for a higher study and experience than that provided to man by physical science.

The problem of causality has raised questions that stress the need for philosophy. Science believes that every event has a cause and resorts to a kind of linear argument, thinking that to be a cause means just to be antecedent in time. Our movement from effects to causes leads us nowhere, and we find ourselves landed in a hopeless pursuit. The question of an ultimate cause cannot be

answered by science. The end or purpose of action is, to it, enveloped in darkness. If the order and method of events in the universe is determined, not by the way in which we are accustomed to observe cause-and-effect-relation, but by the laws of a living organism directed by a unitary force, science cannot but find itself in a fool's paradise. When there is mutual interaction among the constituents of the universe, the commonsense view of causality falls to the ground. We require a reflective higher study, which is provided by philosophy, in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion regarding the true scheme of things. An enquiry into the nature of facts observed by science leads us to epistemology and metaphysics. Our very denial of all possibility of knowing the nature of Reality implies our rightful claim to know it. It is impossible for us to desist from working for the noble cause to which philosophy awakens us.

### **Swami Sivananda and Philosophy**

According to Swami Sivananda, philosophy is not merely a logical study of the conclusions of science or a synthesis of the different sciences. Its methods are different from those of science, though, for purposes of higher reflection and contemplation, it would accept the researches of science and its accumulated material. Swami Sivananda, however, is not inclined to give too much importance to science, though, for purposes of instructing the modern man in the great truths of philosophy, he has no objection to taking illustrations from the limitations of science and from the necessity that modern science feels for

accepting the existence of a reality beyond sense-perception. To Swami Sivananda, the value of philosophy rests mainly in its utility in reflective analysis and meditation on the Supreme Being. Philosophy in the sense of a mere play of reason he regards as useless in one's search for spiritual knowledge. As a necessary condition of spiritual meditations on the path of Jnana-Yoga, the value of philosophy is incalculable. It also provides the necessary prop for and gives the rationale behind the paths of Raja-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Karma-Yoga. As a staunch follower of the philosopher Sankara, he builds his philosophy on a life of experience first, and reason afterwards. Swami Sivananda excludes from his philosophy no theory of life, no canon of religion, no truth of science, no view held by people, if these will only aid the spiritual aspirant in his effort at Self-realisation. He accepts the conclusions of all, and regards even inadequate theories as preparations for a wider view, as steps leading to a greater fulfilment. There are stages in the evolution of man, and all cannot have the same philosophy of life. Thoughts differ, temperaments vary and practices disagree with one another, on account of the various conceptions of the meaning and purpose of life that different people in different stages of evolution have in their minds. One of the great principles of Swami Sivananda is not to unsettle the minds of others or disturb the beliefs of the ignorant. His method is a very peaceful, harmonising and agreeable one; his philosophy is, in this sense, universal in its scope. His is not any particular system or school of philosophy, but all systems and all schools synthesised, transmuted, absorbed and

transcended. He would not disagree with anyone completely, but take everyone at the stage he is in and come down or rise up to his level in order to absorb him into himself and present himself as a useful and compassionate benefactor of all. To him, men are just phases of the appearance of the Absolute, and their views, behaviours and practices are but the natural and necessary stages in the evolution of the universe towards the great consummation of the self in the Absolute. Hence, his philosophy is all love, friendliness and joy, not merely a bit of circumscribed logic or a cosy dogma of personal preferences. Philosophy to him is the technique of right living, of directing the course of life towards a higher state of existence, whether this is achieved consciously with the effort of understanding, or by faith, habit and tradition. Life is common to all, and so Swami Sivananda's philosophy, as the art of life, is applicable to all. From the highest rational being to the lowest man moved only by instinct—all will find the food necessary for their souls in the highly comforting and solacing philosophy of Swami Sivananda. His philosophy is as valuable as life itself, for, it is the principle of rational guidance in everyone's life, and is based on an experience to which the ordinary man has no access but which every man seeks to obtain, whether he knows it or not, in everyone of his thoughts and actions.

## CHAPTER III: THE METHOD AND SCOPE OF PHILOSOPHY

### The Approach to Philosophy

The methods employed in philosophical reasonings and enquiries include the basic presuppositions of scientific approach in general; but over and above these methods, philosophical processes endeavour to discover ways of considering and knowing the facts implied in the phenomena of experience. Before entering into a detailed discussion of the proper methods of philosophy, we will do well to remember the principles laid down by the philosopher Descartes. In his *Discourse on Method*, Descartes gives an outline of the procedure he followed in philosophical enquiry: "The first of these was to accept nothing as true which I did not clearly recognise to be so; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudice in judgments, and to accept in them nothing more than was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I could have no occasion to doubt it. The second was to divide up each of the difficulties which I examined into as many parts as possible, and as seemed requisite in order that it might be resolved in the best manner possible. The third was to carry on my reflections in due order, commencing with objects that were the most simple and easy to understand, in order to rise little by little, or by degrees, to knowledge of the more complex, assuming an order, even if a fictitious one, among those which do not follow a natural sequence relatively to one another. The last was in all cases to make enumerations so complete and reviews so general that I should be certain of having omitted nothing."

The true philosophic method should not be lopsided, should not be biased to any particular or special dogma, but comprehend within itself the processes of reflection and speculation and at the same time be able to reconcile the deductive and the inductive methods of reasoning. The philosophy of the Absolute rises above particulars to greater and greater universals, basing itself on facts of observation and experience by the method of induction and gradual generalisation of truths, without missing even a single link in the chain of logic and argumentation, reflection and contemplation, until it reaches the highest generalisation of the Absolute Truth; and then by the deductive method comes down to interpret and explain the facts of experience in the light of the nature of this Truth. This is a great example of the most satisfactory method of philosophical enquiry.

Philosophy being the way of the knowledge of Truth, its method must be in agreement with the nature of Truth. In philosophy and religion the end always determines the nature of the means. What we know is not entirely different in nature from the essential constitution of the means by which we know it. The immediate objects of our experience here are the entities of the physical universe, and the means of our knowledge of them are our senses which, too, partake of physical characteristics. Hence the method that philosophy employs in its approach to Truth is much dependent upon what conception we have of philosophy and of the nature of the goal of philosophy. Our goal may be matter, mind or Spirit, and accordingly we may become either materialists, idealists or mystics. Our instrument of



knowledge may be the senses, understanding, reason or intuition. And our theories of knowledge may lead us to be empiricists, rationalists, transcendentalists, absolute idealists or spiritual intuitionists. All these theories resort mainly to two processes; contemplation of what is considered to be indubitable and real, and a searching analysis and critical study of empirical experience, including all the methods and conclusions of science. The former helps us to a greater knowledge of the goal of philosophy, and the latter to a disavowal of false values and vindication of the methods and fundamental principles of philosophy. The theories of knowledge and reality generally subject the existing ones to a critical investigation as to their nature and contents and found strong systems of thought after protracted contemplation on the possible nature of reality.

### **Scepticism and Agnosticism**

Philosophy is said to have begun with wonder. The marvel of creation evokes the admiration of man, and its mysteriousness excites his wonder; and this wonder naturally leads to a serious enquiry into the nature of things, for man is not content to rest in a state of awe based on ignorance and is curious to know the truth behind the enthralling wonder of the world. He investigates, speculates, argues and discusses, and comes to a settled opinion of the nature of things in this wonderful world. This becomes his philosophy. Modern man, however, seems to have stepped into the region of philosophy through doubt and sceptical thinking. Man commenced

doubting the validity of authority and dogma no less than that of accepted traditional beliefs. Descartes started with doubting everything, even the validity of thought itself. Later, Kant, too, followed the critical method of enquiry in philosophy. Bradley was of the opinion that the chief need of philosophy is "a sceptical study of first principles." However, he adds: "By scepticism is not meant doubt about or disbelief in some tenet or tenets. I understand by it an attempt to become aware and to doubt all preconceptions."

The technique of doubt in philosophical pursuits has however, the danger of the possibility of falling into a hopeless maze of rank scepticism, with no ground left even for the sceptic to stand on, or into agnosticism, which is a smug way of coolly forgetting the basic significations of the sceptical outlook and speciously arguing that nothing definite can be known in reality. Scepticism as a principle to be followed at the commencement of the application methods in philosophy is really praiseworthy, for, all philosophy, as above said, begins in wonder and doubt. A secret and irresistible urge to know that which presents itself as something extending beyond the scope of human knowledge and a simultaneous dissatisfaction with the surface view of things is the foundation of all enterprise in philosophy. Though philosophy may begin in doubt, it should not end in doubt; for, then, the very purpose of philosophy would be defeated. If the sceptic is left to confine himself to his position of universal doubt and disbelief, he becomes guilty of dogmatism. When he tries to free himself from dogmatism, he cuts the ground from under his own feet. This is the fate of the sceptical

approach, which overreaches itself and stultifies its own purpose. Only an acute and sincere thinker like Descartes could detect this error in entertaining universal doubt and come to the wise conclusion that the existence of the doubter himself cannot be doubted. His philosophy began with doubt but ended in absolute certainty regarding the nature of reality. Scepticism as a method of philosophy has value only when it is aware of its limitations and scope, and not when it tries to assume a metaphysical status.

Agnosticism is easily the consequence of the thoroughgoing sceptical outlook, and it reaches the conclusion that the reality of things cannot be known, for almost the same reasons as those advanced by the sceptic. Knowledge of reality is impossible, inasmuch as we have no means of knowing it. It may appear that the agnostic position is in some way better than the findings of the sceptic, as the sceptic disposes of all questions by disbelief outright, due to his conviction of there being no possibility of arriving at any certainty regarding anything, while the agnostic only denies the chance of our having any knowledge of it. But the theory as a whole is, obviously, untenable. "Its essential defect is that it is based on the unconscious assumption that man is somehow an alien in the very world which gave him birth and in whose bosom he lives and moves and has his being, that he is doomed to look at the universe through the medium of forms and categories of thought, which are, so to speak, mental spectacles of foreign manufacture" (D. M. Edwards: *The Philosophy of Religion* p. 185). "To say that reality is such that our knowledge cannot reach it, is a claim to know

reality; to urge that our knowledge is of a kind which must fail to transcend appearance, itself implies that transcendence. For, if we had no idea of a beyond, we should assuredly not know how to talk about failure or success. And the test, by which we distinguish them, must obviously be some acquaintance with the nature of the goal" (F. H. Bradley: *Appearance and Reality*, p. 1). Agnosticism as a method fails, because to assert that we know only appearance and cannot know any reality beyond it, we must already possess some knowledge of reality, which alone could possibly enable us to have any knowledge of the distinction between appearance and reality.

### **Empiricism and Rationalism**

Empiricism as a method of philosophy is mainly confined to sense-experience. It urges that all knowledge obtained by the senses is of what is already existent outside themselves and that reason has its function in carefully judging the nature of the perceptive material provided to it by the senses. The laws of reason, according to empiricism, are copies of and controlled by knowledge which is *a posteriori*. No *a priori* knowledge in the sense of what rationalism contends to be present in reason is ever possible. Rational concepts are by-products of the experiential material. The source of knowledge is sense-experience and not mind or reason. The method of acquiring knowledge is inductive. Ideas are reducible to sensations. Knowledge cannot be gained by merely finding that the opposite, which is inconceivable, as rationalism

holds, and truth cannot be established by the fact that to deny it implies, somehow, its reaffirmation. *A priori* knowledge independent of sense-experience is inconceivable. There are, therefore, no universal and necessary self-evident truths that are adumbrated by rationalism. So goes the bold empiricism.

The defect of empiricism lies in the fact that the senses are untrustworthy as means of right knowledge. Sense-percepts have being or reality only in relation to the constitutions of the respective senses, and never independently. Minus the characteristics of the senses, our empirical percepts are nothing, which is equal to saying that we know, in an objective way, only what is already contained in the very nature of the senses subjectively. This is certainly not a reliable or valid knowledge of reality. The background of the sense-percepts ever remain unknown to us, and the attitude which we develop towards the things in themselves that lie beyond the reach of the senses is naturally one of doubt. It only means that we have to become sheer sceptics with regard to the nature of reality. In the West, Locke's empiricism naturally paved the way for Hume's scepticism. The sceptic's attitude has a very harmful reaction on the progress of philosophy, for, if we are to carry scepticism to its logical limits, there can never be any such thing as universal and necessary truths, and all that we know would be, at least on the suppositions of Hume, mere fragmentary and disconnected shreds of events, which would convey no meaning at all, due to lack of causal relation and necessary connection among themselves. Doubt and disbelief of every settled opinion is

not only non practicable but is detrimental to the very position of the doubter himself, for, a systematic doubter who seriously pursues his method without deceiving himself has to doubt his own judgments, in order that he may avoid the charge of peremptoriness in his search for truth. This, however, he cannot do. What he really does is to doubt all other positions except his own! A dogmatic adherence to one's own convictions where other views are possible is not the characteristic of a true philosophic method. To know that we do not know implies the acceptance of some criterion of certainty, some knowledge which we already possess without any trace of doubt. Truth, goodness and beauty lose their meaning and value when unconditional doubt sweeps into our hearts. Life becomes an empty affair, with no intelligible aim before it. Empiricism is the precursor of scepticism, and as a method of enquiry into the nature of Truth, it is incomplete and fallible.

The mathematical method of rationalism takes reason to be the sole means of acquiring philosophical knowledge. According to it, the objective universe is known, arranged and controlled by the *a priori* laws of reason. The universe is an expression of the innate rational nature of the knowing subject. The criterion of truth is not sensory but intellectual, rational and deductive. The mathematical methods of deduction are most suited to a proper philosophy. Knowledge is gained when the opposite of what is inconceivable is discovered. Truth can be established by the fact that to deny it implies its reaffirmation in one way or another. True knowledge is *a*

*priori* and is independent of sense-experience. This knowledge is self-evident, and so it implies universal and necessary truths. But even rationalism taken exclusively cannot escape the charge of being non-critical in regard to its own position. How can the rationalist be sure that what he knows through his rational powers is uncontradicted knowledge? What one thinks to be a self-evident truth need not necessarily be so. There is nothing, whatsoever, to prove that the principles that the rationalist logically deduces from his *a priori* premises really correspond to the actual characteristics of the world of experience. The geometrical method of reasoning may be very pleasing to the philosopher, but it need not carry with it the stamp of universal validity. The self-evident nature of the truths discovered independently by rationalism has been called in question. Many of the so-called self-evident truths turn out to be private to their owners and do not enjoy universal acceptance. Even in regard to the principles of logic and the laws of thought, there is no universal agreement. The rationalist is certain about the ability of reason to give him uncontradictable knowledge. He forgets, however, that reason cannot be taken as an infallible instrument of knowledge and that its only function is the critical examination, verification and judgment of the knowledge that we obtain through the senses. Direct or immediate knowledge is given to us relatively in sense-perception, and absolutely in intuitional revelation, but not in reason. Reason has a purely negative value and is not a positive means of knowledge. The senses and intuition provide us with knowledge which reason cannot contradict, though it

can criticise and judge them. There are certain facts, of course, which we cannot know through the senses; but this does not mean that reason can know them. It is only in spiritual intuition that they are realised. Unless the innate ideas of the rationalist are equated with the infallible revelations of intuition, they cannot carry much weight in the light of an experience which presents itself before us as having the value of reality. If what is called a self-evident truth is confined to reason alone, its validity is capable of being doubted. Only when it is taken to mean a spiritual realisation of Reality does its truth rise above the realms of doubt and criticism.

### **The Critical Method of Kant**

The critical or transcendental method of philosophy employed by Kant takes stock of the arguments of empiricism and rationalism and builds a new system of tremendous importance in the history of philosophic thought. Kant follows the method of the analysis of the conditions and limits of knowledge. He points out that, though the material of our knowledge is supplied by the senses, the universality and the necessity about it comes from the very nature and constitution of the understanding, which is the knower of all things in the world. But the world which we thus know through synthetic *a priori* knowledge is not the real world, for, it is built by the materials supplied by the senses, which gain the characters of universality and necessity when they are brought into shape by the categories provided by the understanding. The world of reality cannot be known by the powers that man



possesses at present. If we had been endowed with a consciousness-in-general or an intellectual intuition uninfluenced by the judgments and categories of the understanding, it would have been possible for us to know the reality as such; but as this kind of consciousness is not possessed by us, we cannot know reality. What we know are just empirical facts or phenomena constructed by percepts and concepts common to all men. The postulates of reality that reason advances are only necessities felt by it and not realities in themselves.

In the philosophy of Kant reason reaches its limits and also becomes conscious of these limits. The strata of the senses, understanding and reason are thoroughly investigated and critically examined and their weaknesses exposed. So far all is good. But Kant would seem to many to discourage all effort towards the acquisition of a knowledge of reality, making the very search for knowledge a hopeless affair. To him, knowledge is a synthetic relational product of the logical self. He feels that the ideals of metaphysics which the reason cherishes are just regulative principles which seem to have no reality beyond being mere hypotheses. He makes philosophy in the sense of metaphysics an impossibility, holding that all knowledge is phenomenal. One of the defects of his system lies in his thinking that intuition is confined to sense-perception. He seems to feel that man cannot have non-mediate experience except through sensory contact. Though he is profound enough to conceive of an intellectual intuition transcending the senses and understanding, he does not raise it beyond a mere logical concept which does not share the nature of

reality. Though theoretically possible, his intellectual intuition seems to have no practical value. The fact, however, appears to be that Kant was not aware that he himself had in him intimations of this intellectual intuition, while he declared the world to consist of appearances and posited the things-in-themselves as unknown but existing realities. He comes to the borderland of reality and then retraces his steps, as if frightened by its stupendousness. Swami Sivananda would join hands with Kant in holding that the world is phenomenal; but to him, the intuition of Reality is not a mere intellectual possibility but the very basis of life itself. Swami Sivananda recognises that the Supreme Self, which is the foundation of all existence, is to be known in a unique and non-rational way and that this Self-knowledge cannot be expressed through the categories of the understanding, which work in agreement with the material provided by the senses. The knowledge which one has of the Self cannot be ground in the mill of the senses and reason, for, it is non-relative and constitutes an integral comprehension. It is beyond all conceivable proofs of knowledge, for it is the basis of all proof. To Kant, God is an object of faith, but to Swami Sivananda He is an object of experience. It is only when we narrow down the experience to the logical and empirical realms that we are inclined to dub it as a postulate. The philosophy of Swami Sivananda does not begin with postulates; it is an exposition of spiritual experience.

## **The Dialectical Method of Hegel**

Kant's critical method was taken much further and completed by Hegel in a staggering system of idealism built by means of what he termed the dialectical method. This method of Hegel consists in the constructive dialectical process of opposition and reconciliation. Thesis, antithesis and synthesis are its moments. The existence of the finite and its assertion of itself as such is the thesis. This thesis naturally evokes the existence and assertion of the finite that is its opposite. This is its antithesis. The relation between the thesis and the antithesis implies a reconciliation of these two in a higher synthesis brought about by the evolving force of the Whole, which transcends the isolated factors of the existence and the assertion of the thesis and the antithesis. This reconciliation results in the cooperation of the thesis and the antithesis and in a blend of the existence and the assertion of the unity of the synthesis. Then this synthesis itself becomes a thesis to which there is an antithesis. The two again get unified and transcended in a still higher synthesis. This process of dialectical unification in higher and higher syntheses continues in various grades, progressively, until the Absolute is reached, where all contradiction is finally and fully reconciled. For Hegel, the forms and matter of Kant constitute an organism in which they blend to make up the universal Whole. Forms are one with matter; thought is one with reality; knowledge is being. The internal and external are identical processes. The categories of Kant are the framework, not merely of thought, but of reality itself.

According to Hegel, logic and metaphysics are one and the same. The study of reason is the study of reality, and metaphysics is the science of reality. The real is the rational, and the rational is the real. Hegel dismisses Kant's idea that the categories of knowledge are outside reality and cannot be applied to the realm of reality. In criticism of Kant he says that "thoughts do not stand between us and things, shutting us off from things; they rather shut us together with them." He contends that the categories of knowledge are present in the universal nature of reality itself and are not confined merely to the knowing subject. The categories become the processes of the development of thought through the dialectical movement of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, or affirmation, negation and reconciliation. Knowledge becomes identical with reality. Thought and being get blended together in the Absolute.

Hegel gives us a concept of Reality. But he is not concerned with the possibility of realising it in one's being. A careful study will show that the dialectic of Hegel does not give us knowledge of Reality, but only tabulates and examines the categories involved in one's attempt to grasp rationally the nature of Reality. Swami Sivananda's absolutism is very different from Hegel's, though there are many resemblances between the two. We shall have occasion to discuss these systems in greater detail in the course of our study. For the present it is enough to know that Swami Sivananda stands for intuition and realisation or *Anubhuti*, and not merely for a rational concept of it. The method of Hegel will not find it easy to establish how thought and reality, logic and metaphysics, are ultimately

one. It is only with difficulty that one can prove the presence of the categories of knowledge in the framework of reality. The dialectic as conceived by Hegel will fail in this attempt. Hegel, too, had a touch of a super-rational inspiration in him, without which he could not have posited the unity of the Absolute, which is beyond sense-perception, though he was very much averse to anything that could not be subjected to the laws of reason. The real is grasped only in being.

### **Other Methods**

The Socratic method of philosophical disquisition consists in arguing out the entire anatomy of the subject in question, in the manner of a dialogue. The *prima facie* view is refuted by exposing the inconsistencies and contradictions involved in accepting it as true. The teacher professes entire ignorance all the while, finally eliciting the truth from the mouth of the questioner himself, by the ingenious method of subtle examination, through questioning, dividing and analysis. This technique of argument is based on a complete knowledge of the fundamental component elements of the subject of the argument and their relation to the constitution and condition of the intellect and reason of the opposite party concerned in the discussion, and also on grounding the argument in the most basic facts acceptable to that party. The Socratic method can be summed up in the following processes: (1) The assumption of an ignorance of truth by the teacher, which has been called the Socratic irony: This attitude of intellectual humility and basing oneself on the

most fundamental of propositions in an argument is, as with Descartes, essential to unravel the depths of truth. (2) The method of dialogue or conversation as an effective technique in the discovery of truth: This is based on a grasp of the presence of the knowledge of the true and the good in every person at the bottom of his being, in spite of hasty conclusions that one may make regarding things due to immature observations and pet prejudices. This common ground of truth among men can be brought out to the surface by careful analysis, argument and investigation, by question and answer. This is often called the art of philosophic midwifery. (3) The establishment of correct concepts or definitions before trying to know their application in life's particular instances. (4) The art of proceeding from the observed particular facts to more general truths, i.e., adopting the inductive method of reasoning. The method of Socrates is also deductive in the sense that it draws out the consequences and implications of certain concepts and judges their validity.

The analytical method of Socrates was followed by the synthetic dialectic of Plato, which concerned itself with discovering the causal relation between thought and being. Plato's dialectic method mostly consisted in the grouping of scattered particulars into a single concept or idea and the dissection of this concept or idea into classes, i.e., the generalisation and arrangement of the idea. The arriving at a fact depends on the establishment of a correct concept or notion or principle. It is not possible to know, for example, what the true is or who a good man is, unless we first settle in our knowledge the nature of truth and goodness.

According to the pragmatic method, everything is real when it tends to fruitful activity and results. The character of fulfilling the primal interests of man should be the guiding principle in philosophy. Human interest is the touchstone of philosophical endeavour, of all activity—physical, mental, moral or spiritual. Values are to be judged by results, and the test of truth is workability. We need not discuss here the methods of the logical positivists, the naive realists, and the like, as these are not very relevant to endeavours directed towards arriving at absolute truth. The psychological method of Descartes, consisting of enquiring into the origin of ideas, Bergson's intuitional method in biological evolution and Spinoza's geometrical method, are other techniques of great consequence.

The way of the Rig-Veda and the earlier Upanishads is purely intuitional. Seers entered into the heart of Reality in intense concentration of mind, in meditation, ecstasy, rapture and attunement, and proclaimed to the world in their simple language and powerful style that Nature is, in truth, one. The Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya and Mimamsa philosophies bolstered up a thoroughly realistic method of the analysis of experience. The Yoga system pursued the psychological techniques of inner discipline, while the Vedanta followed the purely spiritual approach to life, backing it up with a rigorous logical scrutiny and examination of experience. But, all these Indian systems have one thing in common: to them all, philosophy is an intensely practical affair, the art of wise living, the way of the attainment of salvation and freedom of the self.

## **Characteristics of the Philosophical Method**

The method of philosophy in general is not to study things piecemeal, as physical science does, but to make a comprehensive study of the totality of experience provided to us through all avenues of knowledge. Science has its special provinces of observation and experiment; but philosophy, having as its goal the solution of the riddle of existence in its completeness, cannot be content with partial observation through the senses. In its vast studies philosophy takes into consideration the objects of experience derived not only through the senses, understanding and reason, but through mystical communion and realisation, with which science, evidently, has no concern in the least. Philosophy is a critical reflection on what is implied in experience, in order to enable man to come in direct contact with it. All men have, no doubt, experience, but not all are endowed with that higher faculty of reflecting upon what is buried deep in experience. This higher reflection is the function of the philosopher, and it is this that distinguishes him from the mass of mankind. The common man takes the world to be physical in its constitution, isolated from his own subjective self, and believes in the independence of the laws of Nature over which he seems to have no control. But it is a superior understanding that discovers the super-sensible fact of the organic relation, which the outward universe has with man's essential intelligence. Man is not a puppet pulled by strings held by an arbitrary Nature. Life is not a mere marionette-play, in which man made to dance by strings pulled by a capricious director. The universe is friendly,



and man is not only an organic part of it but has in him the potentiality of knowing, ruling and coming into at-onement with it. Philosophy, therefore, corrects the commonsense notions of the unreflective mind and thus becomes a great panacea for the ills of life caused by ignorance and impotency on the part of man.

The validity of genuine philosophical truths lies in their universality and necessity, and are not in need of any further verification of their tenability. They are illuminated by the torch of intuition, and hence any external verification of their validity is not only not necessary but meaningless. They are always characterised by immediacy, universality and necessity and, consequently, by infallibility and perfect veracity. They hold good for all minds in all conditions, for they spring from the depths of knowledge. There are certain features of reality pervading even ordinary experience, recognisable through subtle contemplation and reflection. It is the purpose of philosophy to study these pervasive features of reality making themselves felt in experience, so that by means of these visible features man may be in a position to rise directly to an intuition of what they feebly indicate. It is a mistake made by many thinkers to reject all super-rational experience as irrational and to debar it from the field of philosophical studies. Facts that reason cannot know are not therefore infra-rational. When it becomes impossible for reason to comprehend certain truths, it is not rational to reject them as anti-rational. We cannot subject super-sensible facts to the categories of our knowledge, but they can be logically deduced from such facts, without our being

irrational. What the commonplace student of philosophy actually means when he says that super-sensory realities are irrational is that they are totally dissimilar to all phenomena that are known to him through the senses. Dissimilarity to rational concepts is not always irrationality. What is beyond reason is known in a knowledge which is private from the point of view of the one who has it, but universal in itself. The impossibility of communicating such knowledge through the usual visible means of the world has led many to the false notion that it does not exist at all. Concepts evolved from sense-experience are powerless in judging the nature of the ultimate Cause of all causes—the indubitable Self. No one can deny his own self or his being conscious of his self; nor can one deny that this consciousness is beyond the senses and reason.

### **The Integral Method**

Swami Sivananda's method combines revelation, meditation and reason in one. To him, all methods of sense-function and the mental approach to Truth have to be set aside as faulty for the reason that their deliverances are untrustworthy, being logically indefensible and psychologically warped by the defects of the instruments. Infallible knowledge is to be had only in the intuition of Reality, and all knowledge derived through the senses, understanding and reason falls short of it in an enormous degree. No other method of approach to Truth than communion with being as such can give us ultimately reliable knowledge. Unless the knower and the known are identified in knowledge, knowledge is not true, but gives us

only a semblance of what we really seek to obtain. Swami Sivananda is a faithful follower of Sankara in his basic presuppositions, though he is equally friendly with Ramanuja, Madhva and the other dualistic and pluralistic philosophers. To Swami Sivananda, philosophy is the way of the attainment of Brahman, and his method includes all that is best in every school of philosophy. Empiricism, rationalism, transcendentalism and absolutism come to a loving embrace in his most catholic system. The experience of the nature of the individual in relation to the universe, of which it is a content, becomes the basis of philosophical enquiry, which culminates in spiritual meditation and realisation. Sruti, Yukti and Anubhava—authority, reason and intuition—are the stages of the ascent of the soul aspiring for eternal life. Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana—hearing (or study), reflection and meditation—sum up the practical method of the spiritual aspirant. Hearing and reflection comprise the entire gamut of speculative philosophy, and Nididhyasana is the final fruition in meditation, leading to *Sakshatkara* or realisation. Aspiration for the Eternal is the greatest incentive to philosophical enquiry, whose aim is not only *to know*, but *to be*.

Human knowledge, for Swami Sivananda, is not an exact representation of reality, nor is the world a mere projection of the human mind. The world is the objective appearance of the Absolute, thus being ideal, but is also the cause of the representation of the same in human knowledge, thus being real. The world is ideal as contained in the Absolute, real as being outside the finite minds. The

variety observed in sensations should prove that there is variety in objects which cannot themselves be sensations. Philosophic techniques rise first from the establishment of the Self as the source of knowledge. Philosophy should proceed with equipments that bear relations to the Self primarily, for, bereft of knowledge of this unavoidable relation, any enterprise in this direction is bound to be a wild-goose chase. There is a fundamental correlativity of all things as values converging on the Self, which is unmistakably the unchanging centre of all experience. The question of the existence and the nature of this Self will be discussed in its proper place. How are we to be sure whether a method that we employ to achieve a certain end is valid or not? Perhaps, in ordinary life, this will be vouched for by the possibility at least of a hope of accomplishing the purpose in view. But we sift well the material on our hands and judge the strength and usefulness of it before we actually use it. A thorough knowledge of the correctness and the satisfactory character of the method has always to precede the employment of the same for chosen purpose. We should not make assertions or take active steps without first ascertaining the powers of the instruments of knowledge and action. "We must understand what knowing is, in order to explain anything at all, so that any proposed explanation of knowing would necessarily presuppose that we understood what knowing is" (Prichard: *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*). The Atman, which cannot be gainsaid and which is the presupposition of experience, is the pivot of philosophical disquisitions. We have, in the mystical method of intellectual and moral

purification advocated by Plotinus, a parallel to this comprehensive method in philosophy.

The central aim of the philosophy of Swami Sivananda is the living of the highest life, a life fixed in the knowledge of the principles which are the ultimate regulators of all things. An enlightened life of peace joy is the goal of his sublime philosophy. And this blessedness can be attained only in the Divine Being. Dharma, the ethical value; Artha, the material value; and Kama, the vital value, are all based on Moksha which is the supreme value of existence. The aim of life is the attainment of Moksha. Swami Sivananda's system is a specimen of a type of philosophy that arises on account of a necessity felt by all in life, and not because of any curiosity characteristic of thinkers who have only a speculative interest and no practical aspiration. The sight of evil and suffering, pain and death, directs one's vision to the causes of these phenomena; and this, in its turn, necessitates an enquiry into the reality behind life as a whole. It is not an academic interest in theoretical pursuits, but a practical irresistible urge to contact Reality, that leads to the glorious enterprise of true philosophy. Philosophy, in India, does not pretend to provide one with any new knowledge which was not existent before, but elaborately expounds the structure of the eternal knowledge which is handed down by the ancient sages through several generations. Swami Sivananda is a link in the long chain of seers who have imparted their spiritual wisdom to mankind through precept as well as by practice. His philosophy is one of a series of intense meditations meant to lead seekers

to an ineffable spiritual experience, an experience which is not sensory or intellectual, but timeless.

Swami Sivananda teaches that the bondage of man consists in his ignorance of the true nature of his Self and that his freedom is in the knowledge of the Self. By bondage he means subjection to the process of birth and death and the consequent experience of suffering and pain. Self-knowledge can be attained even in this very life, provided one puts forth sufficient effort towards this end. True happiness can be had only in the Self, and it is futile to search for it in this temporal world, which does not partake of the nature of Reality. The knowledge that man has to strive for is not a theoretical understanding but is the consciousness of the Self. It is neither information gathered regarding the Self, nor a mere acquaintance with it through discursive reason, that can liberate man from his bondage. What is required is practical realisation, which is possible only through profound meditation on the nature of Brahman. This meditation, again, is impossible without strict self-discipline and self-restraint. As Brahman is the sole reality, the means of its realisation should necessarily consist in a conscious abandonment of desires for objects that exist as the non-self and that create an apparent division between consciousness and its contents. Philosophy, to Swami Sivananda, is the living of a life of deep insight and an intense austerity consequent upon it, whose final aim is to secure the bliss of Brahman in one's own Self, which is to be realised as the being identical with Brahman, and the rendering of help to humanity for reaching this glorious consummation of life by teaching

and personal example. It is not a philosophy confined to schools, but is a study of the technique of wise living by grounding oneself in the consciousness of the Self. It is, in other words, learning to manifest the law of the Eternal in the temporal life of the world, to bring a reconciliation between the Absolute and the relative, to move on the earth as a human being, while, at the same time, being unceasingly alive to the presence of the super-mundane Absolute.

The philosophy of Swami Sivananda is not any secret way capable of being trodden only by a select few. It is an all-inclusive method which comprises all existent means of communion with Reality. It is really the Vedanta applied to all aspects of life in order to live one's life at its highest and best. It is the system of the perfect life, the rule of wisdom and the law of liberty. It is not a speculative system reserved for intellectual pleasantries during leisure hours, but is the food of the higher understanding and the light of the innermost Self of man. The Vedanta is as simple as life is; and also it is as complex as life is!

Every citizen of the world can be taught this philosophy, provided the teacher knows well what it truly means and how it can be applied in practice to the different stages of life and to different individuals. It is ignorance and wrong understanding that make certain people think that the philosophy of the Atman or Brahman is an other-worldly theory concerning only a life which follows death. The Vedanta is not any narrow dogma divorced from the facts of everyday life. It can and ought to be applied in the daily life of everyone. Without it life would be a perpetual

groping in darkness. What is man, if not a thought, a feeling, or a group of thoughts and feelings? And the Vedanta is the light that illumines the world of thought, of feeling, of willing, of understanding. It is the life of the thoughtful, the joy of the learned, the destination of the pilgrim soul on the arduous path of knowledge. It is the final explanation of the Yoga of action, of devotion, of concentration, of wisdom and of every conceivable religious, philosophic or mystic methodology.

The Vedanta of Swami Sivananda does not teach that one should detest the world or isolate oneself in some world other than this. It does not proclaim that anyone should forsake his duties in life or put on a grave face or behave in any conspicuous manner. His Vedanta declares that one should not be selfish or attached to any fleeting object, that one should live in the consciousness of the loving brotherhood and unity of the Self in the universe, that the truth of existence is one and indivisible, that division or separation, hatred, enmity, quarrel and selfishness are against the nature of the Self, that the pain of birth and death is caused by desire generated by the ignorance of the Self, that the highest state of experience is immortal life or the realisation of Brahman, that everyone is born for this supreme purpose, that this is the highest duty of man, that all other duties are only aids or auxiliaries to this paramount duty, that one should perform one's prescribed duties with the spirit of non-attachment and dedication of oneself and one's actions to the Supreme Being, that every aspect of one's life should get consummated in this Consciousness. The question is not of abandoning



something or holding on to something, but of a change in the *Drishti* or the vision of life. It is a reorientation in the way of the functioning of the volitional, the conceptual and the perceptual consciousness that is required by the philosophic life. The body will be there; its activities will be there; but these will be transformed into the lustrous gold of the liberated life of Jivanmukti, by the touch of the philosopher's stone of the knowledge of the Self. This life of Self-knowledge is life in its splendid perfection and plenitude. This is the blessed gnosis, the state of freedom or Moksha. The way to such realisation is Vedanta-Sadhana. It commences with the analysis and study of the nature of the Atman, and comprises the inner techniques and processes of Yoga, Bhakti and Karma.

## **CHAPTER IV: THE ATMAN**

### **The Indubitability of the Self**

Man's life on earth is a continuous flow of events, and no event seems to be lasting. There is always a desire to grasp and hold something else, something different from and better than what is possessed at the present. This longing appears to have no end, and it does not seem to lead one to any definite goal. There are only anxiety, vexation, craving and dissatisfaction visible everywhere. Unrest and pain are seen riding over all things in the world. The drama of life is but a show of shifting scenes, and no amount of worldly satisfaction does appear to save one from this ceaseless anguish which follows every failure in the achievement of one's desired end. Youth fades like the evening flower, strength vanishes like the rent cloud, and the beauty of the body quickly gives way to the ugliness of death. All things are certain to pass away either today or tomorrow. Nothing will live. The man of now is not seen in the next moment. The pleasure-centres of the human being mock at him for his folly, and he realises that all that he enjoys is not worth the striving. Earthly prosperity is not free from the tyranny of subsequent misery, and only after several kicks and blows is life learnt to be an essenceless desert where water is not to be found to quench one's thirst. There are occasions when one feels that no increase in health or wealth, no gain and no profit here can be a reason for one to rejoice. In the sorrow of the quest for the transient joys of life, man seems to die every moment and quickly regain his identity now and then, only to repeat the unhappy process endlessly. He is whirled round in the

storm of life's turmoils, and tormented by the substanceless appearances of his erroneous perceptions. Tons of the loads of life seem to be weighing heavy upon his weak shoulders, and he sits forlorn contemplating his unknown future. He is gripped by fear, desire, worry and uneasiness continually. Everything hurries forward; now it is, now not.

The way out of this deplorable predicament is not clearly seen by man who has mistaken the love of the tantalising semblances of pleasure for the delights that he is seeking in his life's endeavours, though the presence of such a way is implied in the gripping dissatisfaction which he feels with whatever is presented to him in experience, and the consequent urge towards something more than all that he can ever hope to think. But is there any such way, really? Yes; it lies in the turning of the tables round, the directing of our search inwards, from things that pass away from the scene quickly, to that which promises greater permanency, wider freedom and deeper satisfaction. This inward quest for the permanent is the march of man towards Truth, which is changeless existence. "It is in the nature of man to strive for happiness, but all the happiness which he can gain by his actions is only of limited duration. The enjoyments of the senses are transient, and the senses themselves are worn out by too much enjoyment; further, sin generally accompanies these enjoyments and makes man unhappy beyond comparison. Even if the pleasures of the world are enjoyed as much as their nature permits, if they are as intense, as various and as uninterrupted as possible, yet old age approaches, and with it death. And the enjoyments of heaven are in reality not more enviable than these pleasures

of the senses; they are of the same nature, although more unmixed and durable. Moreover, they come to an end; for they are gained by actions, and as these latter are finite, their effect must also be finite. In one word, there is necessarily an end to all those enjoyments and what avails us beyond the moment of enjoyment. It is therefore in the nature of man to look out for an unchangeable, infinite happiness which must come from a being in which there is no change—if such a being can be found, it is only from it that man attains an unalterable happiness, and if this be so, this being must become the sole object of all his aspiration and actions. This being is not very far. It resides in your heart” (*Lectures on Yoga and Vedanta*, p.97).

Human life is a process of knowledge. All knowledge implies a subject or a knower, whose relation to an object manifests knowledge. The existence of the knower in an act of knowledge cannot be doubted, for without a knower there is no knowledge, and without knowledge there is no experience. The whole of one’s life is constituted of various forms of experience, and all experience is attended with consciousness. Consciousness has always to be in relation with the subject or the knower. Without a knowing self there is no objective knowledge. The experience of a world outside would become impossible if it is not to be given to a knowing subject. The fact of the known implies the truth of a knower. Even thinking would lose its meaning without our tacitly admitting the existence of our own self. This self reveals itself as the centre of all the knowledge which illumines every form of human activity. “All activities can, ultimately, be reduced to a kind of knowledge. It is some

form of knowledge that fulfils itself through external action. Knowledge determines the texture of action, the course of action and even the nature of the end aimed at by action. Knowledge, here, becomes a stimulus to action, a means to the achievement of a goal beyond, and so something not valuable in itself, but valuable in relation to some other thing which it subserves. Such is the character of human knowledge. And even in human knowledge there are degrees. Some possess more of it, some less. By knowledge we evidently mean here knowledge of something other than knowledge itself. When we have more knowledge about the nature of a thing, we have also more control over it; our activity in the form of the effort of conquering it is less encumbered and so less difficult; our relation to that thing is more intimate, i.e., the psychic distance between us and the thing becomes less; and we enjoy it more fully and really. We possess the thing securely, to some extent, and are free from all anxiety about the thing when the thing is nearest to us—not merely physically but psychically, and this latter aspect is more important than the former; perhaps it is the only important factor—and it is here that our knowledge of the thing is widest and deepest. Logically, we should have the greatest knowledge of and power over a thing when it is non-distinguished from our existence, and we enjoy it the best when we become it. The thing may be any particular entity—one thing, two things, a thousand things, or even the whole universe itself. Thingness is only a synecdochical expression for the entire mass of objective existence. Here the knowledge of the thing is really not *of* it, but *is* the knowledge of our own widened and expanded

self. Our knowledge and our existence are one. Hence the highest knowledge of anything consists in Self-knowledge, in the knowledge of the Self which is higher than the natural and the narrow individual self. Knowledge is not a means to some other end, but it is the end itself. Knowing is being" (*The Divine Life*, Vol. XVI, p.148).

Human consciousness at once presupposes the authenticity of the existence of a personal being, which is the root of this consciousness. The very meaning of human consciousness is objectivity which sets in opposition the subject or the self against the non-subject or the not-self. The individuality of the subject and the object is the necessary condition of all forms of perception or knowledge in the world. Individual consciousness and individual existence are inseparable. The very first truism that the individual is faced with in experience is the awareness of the existence of something which it cannot consider as its own self. This is the starting point of active thinking and action.

The subject is confronted with an urgent need of developing a relationship with the universe which seems to stare at it as the not-self. This need marks the nature of the struggle of life as a whole—its purpose, method and goal. The need for external relation, however, is the outcome of a practical want felt in oneself, a want of thoroughness and genuineness in one's own being. This is the basic hypothesis upon which is constructed the edifice of philosophical speculation. Self-consciousness refuses to rest blind and idle. It stimulates mental and physical activity, a postulate which demands no reason. The value of life is

determined by the characteristics of the effects of this activity. The sense of value is based on the extent, the depth and, consequently, the longevity of the experience of satisfaction in the self. The worth and the righteous nature of all activity is, therefore, dependent on how far it nears the supreme form of knowledge and happiness which is the standard set by the results of the computation of the degrees of perfection as determined by the urge for completeness felt within. The nature of this knowledge and happiness remains to be found out.

The acts of life show that the individual consciously and voluntarily acts because of the joys which are felt by the self as their consequence. An action is a transformation of a being from one condition to another, which, naturally, is the effect of the inability of the individual to rest perpetually in any given condition. It is observed that all actions, mental or physical, have a special nature of being directed to some one or the other of the forms in which the not-self appears. The impossibility to withhold conscious action leads us to the conclusion that there must be an intimate and permanent connection between the subjective conscious being and objective existence. The fact that the vaster the subjective form included in the self's relations and the nearer it is to the self, the greater is the intensity of consciousness and happiness experienced by the self, points the way to the true nature of Reality. The highest knowledge and bliss must be thus the result of a self-merging of existence in consciousness. This is tantamount to a dissolution of the not-self in an all-comprehensive Self, the disappearance of objectivity in self-identical awareness

(*Vide, The Divine Life, Vol. XII, p.149*). The Self is thus beyond all proof, it being the basis of proof. None can ever doubt its existence, for the acceptance of it is the foundation of all knowledge and action. The one who attempts to deny it asserts it unconsciously by the very act of such a denial, for it is the essence of the denier himself. The denier cannot deny himself, and the doubter cannot doubt his own existence. Thinking implies a thinker, doubting a doubter, and knowledge a knower.

### **A Consideration of Different Theories of Self**

The knower or the self cannot be a thing subject to development or process of evolution, as some thinkers opine, for development would mean the cessation of the self at some particular instant of time. Change means the ending of one condition and the beginning of another different from the previous one. If the self is to undergo change, it has to modify its essence in the course of time, so that there would be nothing like a permanently enduring subject of knowledge. That the essence of the self cannot be changed or developed becomes clear from the fact that even change or development would not be known without the assumption of a synthesising consciousness behind the process of change. If the self is to be accepted to be changeless and an ever-enduring being, it ought to mean naturally that it is different from process or development or evolution. The self is non-temporal, is not involved in the time-process, for time is an object of its knowledge.

The self is not a product of past development. The view of Prof. Taylor that the self has for its exclusive material our



emotional interests and purposive attitudes towards the various constituents of our surroundings cannot be accepted for the reason that no kind of process can be admitted into the self. A purposive attitude is a psychical condition, changing, and so dying to itself, and not identical with the self. Even the continuity of a pervading purpose has to become the object of consciousness, for, otherwise, such a purpose cannot exist as a reality. We know of no reality which is unrelated to consciousness in some way or the other. There cannot be a process without something in which it appears or of which it is a temporal condition. A purpose or interest is a temporal flow which ought to become an object of knowledge. There is no flowing without something that flows, or without a ground on which there is a flow. There cannot be mere flying without something that flies. A sustained purpose or an interest is only the maintenance of a continuous psychic function animated by an underlying consciousness which is different from it. Else, when interests change, the self would also change. There would not be the continuity of the I-consciousness in a person, if a consciousness does not persist in all the changes that the personality undergoes in the course of life. The self is not a mere organisation of mental acts, or a bundle of feelings and volitions, but a consciousness that is indivisible. One cannot be aware of an organised system unless the elements or parts constituting it are brought together by a relation of consciousness which itself is not one of the elements forming the system. The self is, therefore, a transcendent consciousness bringing order

to all relational phenomena, but itself remaining beyond all relations.

The view that the self is a monad, spiritual in nature but different from other monads forming the psycho-physical organism, does not stand scrutiny. If the self is a unit centralised among diverse psychic contents or the parts constituting the body, its relation to the latter becomes unintelligible. Is the spiritual monad identical with the contents of the organism, or different from them? If it is different from the organismic contents, it cannot be called the self of man, for then it would remain unrelated to the other parts which are equally essential to the personality of man. Moreover, one could not know that one has an individual organ, for it would lie outside the knowledge of the monad, it having been supposed that it has no relation to the outward organism. If the monad has a relation to the psychical and the physical contents, it would cease to be a simple monad, self-existing and unrelated, so that we would have to accept that the self pervades the entire organism, and that the latter has no existence independent of the former.

The philosopher Bradley supposes that the self and its object are interchangeable, that any particular appearance of the Absolute can be either a subject or an object according to the standpoint from which we judge a particular appearance and the emphasis which we lay by making it the exclusive subject of our consideration. It does not require much thinking to understand that the true self can never become an object, for the object is always insentient in nature, and the self is always sentient. The two

are opposed to each other in their constitution and mode of operation in the process of perception. Further, the self and its object are two different appearances whose difference may have to be known by another larger self which would be required to synthesise by a relation the self and its object. To reduce the self to the state of an object would be to make it one of the appearances themselves. If the self is a phenomenon, there ought to be a knower of it; otherwise even the phenomenon cannot be known to exist. The self is not a phenomenon among phenomena, but a unity through which phenomena are presented as a connected system, in which is reflected a perfect order, a rhythm and symmetry which really belong to the transcendent self. The ordered nature of the world owes its existence to an indivisible self which is its knower. The self is, therefore, not an empirical subject; it is beyond the space-time manifold. Even space-time is what is presented as an object to a knowing subject. It refuses to be grasped by knowledge through the categories in terms of which the senses and the mind operate. The existence of the self is established negatively by the predicates of experience and positively by the self-evident consciousness which one has of oneself at all times. All things and relations, space and time are known to a single subject, because they are all equally present to consciousness. The objects of knowledge may be different from one another, but they are present to a common subject which knows them all in one synthesised perception. The subject, the object and their relation have to be comprehended in a universal Self, which would mean that the true Self of man is not the empirical bundle of

psychic contents, which is interchangeable with other such congeries and which one, by mistake, confuses with the real Self.

The realist view that the mind and its objects are on par with each other, differing only in their properties and functions, again, commits the same mistake of not detecting the necessity of a unifying self above the mind and its objects. It cannot be said that cognition is a mere relation and that the mind and its objects are known to be related to one another in a *compresence* in which the related terms stand to each other in the position of objects having the same reality. But it will be found that the *compresence* of the mind and the objects is possible only if there is a self which knows them both in a single act of perception. Neither the mind nor the objects can be known to exist if they are entirely different from one another. A knowledge of two different entities implies a consciousness obtaining between them, without which not only their relation but even their being itself can be doubted. The existence of a permanent self beyond the mind and the objects remains self-proved by the fact that without it none of our experiences can be satisfactorily accounted for. The self is not merely one among the many items of relational experience, but the centre to which all the items of experience are referred, the source of being, making all understanding and explanation possible, the life, light and love of the whole world. The self is spiritual being, the precondition of knowledge. Objects, facts and conditions cannot be posited unless they are known to a subject which rises above them in knowing and being. Even in ordinary

perception the self remains an unaffected witness uniting all relations, but existing unrelated to the related terms. The self is the Absolute. If knowledge is a relation by *compresence*, this knowledge cannot know the terms related, unless it transcends them.

The self is different from the assemblage of the psychical functions and conditions which contribute to the manifestation of knowledge. It is not a product of any collocation of circumstances externally related to one another. It is not also a totality of situations or a series of appearances or of the nature of difference itself without a unifying subject existing independently of its terms. The view that every passing thought can be considered as the true subject of knowledge cannot be accepted. If any particular thought is to be considered as the ultimate knowing subject, it would be unrelated to the other thoughts that occur in the mind. Further, it would be impossible on this hypothesis to account for memory of the past or anticipation of the future. The self cannot be identified with a stream of consciousness, for a stream is a movement, and a movement cannot know movement, as its very essence is change. We do not know of a flow or a stream without assuming a permanent bed on which the flow or the stream can be possible. The self cannot be any kind of process, for every process is an object of knowledge. Any part or item of a process cannot itself be aware of the entire process. A process has a meaning only when it is known by a being which is not involved in the process but remains as its witness. The self is not analysable into further

constituents, for anything that is subject to division is temporal and perishable.

The self is of the nature of self-luminosity and intelligence. If the self were something other than a self-illuminated or self-conscious being, it would have to be known as an object by another being which ought to be self-luminous. But if the self is not at all to be self-luminous, we would be led to an infinite regress of positing a self behind self, so that there would be no end of our search for the origin of knowledge. The self is not momentary in nature, for what is momentary is destructible and cannot be the source of knowledge. The perception of momentariness is due to a succession of the appearance of objects at different instants of time. It is not the self or the consciousness that is momentary, but the perception of objects determined by the nature of the appearance of objects to consciousness. Momentary elements are what are known by consciousness as its objects. The self is not made manifest by external proofs as outward things are. The proofs by which objects are known are based on the self-evident consciousness of the self. As light illumines others but does not stand in need of another light to illumine itself, so does the self, being the source and essence of consciousness, illumine the whole world, but is not in need of another self or proof to know itself or determine its existence. The self is not one with the objects which it knows and is not on the same level of reality with them, forming an organism or an organ. If it were so, there would be darkness enveloping all things, for want of a knowing self. The objects do not determine the self, for it ranges

beyond them in every way. It is not of the nature of difference—in fact it has no relation to difference—and the differences that are observed in the forms of knowledge are due to the difference in the structure and conditions of objects presented to consciousness, but not of consciousness itself. Consciousness does not create objects but reveals them in perception. They appear to be related to consciousness on account of their apparent association with it through a Vritti or a mental modification. The self and its object are opposed to each other as light and darkness. Their difference is not usually known because of the delusion of Adhyasa by which one superimposes the attributes of the self on the objects and of the objects on the self. The objects are not also modes in the perceiving consciousness: they are different from it, and it becomes aware of them, though the essence of both is the Absolute.

Though the objects that are known in consciousness are different and of various kinds, consciousness is one. It is what integrates all sensations and perceptions into a coherent whole. If consciousness were a changing phenomenon, such a synthesis of knowledge would be impossible, and there would arise the contingency of introducing different consciousnesses at different times. Such consciousnesses, in order that their existences might be justified, may have to be known by another consciousness, which, after all, we have to admit as the real self. That the self is one and not more than one need not be proved, for no one ever feels that one is divided, that one is two or more. Everyone knows that one's self cannot be cut or divided into segments but always retains its unity. Even

supposing that the self can be manifold, we would be led to the necessity of asserting a unitary consciousness knowing the difference between the parts assumed in the self. If the self were not self-luminous and non-dual, there would be, when it manifests objects, a doubt as to whether the cognition of the objects is there or not, whether or not the objects are really known to exist. But no one at the time of cognition ever doubts the fact of cognition. The self knows the objects and it is not the objects that know it. The self is different from the very notion of difference, while it knows different objects and their differences. Memory and cognition also establish the self-identity of knowledge. The passing forms of perception are not the self, for they require another self to know them as mutually related.

The self never becomes an object. If it could become an object, one would feel the 'I' at the time of a particular cognition of a 'this' or a 'that,' and there would be no such thing as an I-consciousness or self-consciousness. Moreover, the self, while becoming an object, would also become inert and a transient material entity like the other objects of the world. The very admission of a world-process requires as its justification a consciousness which is not determined by anything outside it.

The view that there can be many selves is involved in a difficulty. If selves were many, they could not be known to exist for want of a knower of their existence and difference. The moment we assert the plurality of selves, we admit unconsciously that our consciousness is superior to and knows the plural selves. Plurality is rooted in unity. A division of consciousness is never possible. A consciousness



that is divided is not really consciousness but an object, isolated and changing. Division and limitation are known to consciousness which itself is not divided or limited. Division is the same as finitude, and if consciousness cannot be divided, it cannot be finite, also. The self is infinite and so it cannot be many. Consciousness can be conscious of finitude, but, thereby, it does not become the finite. If there were many selves, their manifoldness would be a truth, their relations would be real. To know their many-ness a larger consciousness would have to be introduced, for without it there would be no knowledge of many-ness. Somehow, we are thrown back upon an absolute Self, unrelated and supremely real. The position of many selves would give rise to the difficulty of there being no common world to all selves, for their worlds would differ from one another and have no link to connect them. Every limit has to become a content of knowledge, and the knowledge of limit would only prove that knowledge is limitless.

The self cannot be identified with the principle of life or an *elan vital* considered as supreme in experience, of which matter and consciousness are only expressions or to which they are subsidiary or adventitious. It is held that matter is but a self-created obstruction to the march of the *elan vital*, and consciousness is only a self-created light for illuminating the path of its evolution. It cannot be said that consciousness is a product of the life-principle, for even the life-principle can be known to exist only on the assumption of a consciousness already. If consciousness is a product, it is subject to destruction, and it cannot be the reality

underlying the life-process. Also, matter is not an auxiliary to consciousness, for it is an object of consciousness. What we call the life-principle is but the bond that subsists between the body and the mind. Life is above matter, but below mind, intellect and consciousness. Matter, life, mind and intellect are empirical categories, and so they cannot be identified with the self.

Attempts were also made to reduce consciousness to a kind of expression of some neutral stuff existing as its raw material. According to William James, experience is a relation which has subject and object as its terms. Knower and known are divisions within a primordial experience. He says: "There is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff 'pure experience,' then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another, into which portions of pure experience may enter. The relation itself is a part of pure experience; one of its 'terms' becomes the subject or bearer of knowledge, the knower; the other becomes the object known." Mind and matter are constructed out of neutral stuff and entities. The same difficulty noted above once again presents itself in this view of consciousness. The neutral stuff of pure experience has to be either consciousness or non-consciousness. If it is the former, then, there cannot be another consciousness proceeding from it, as there cannot be two consciousnesses existing in the relation of cause and effect. If it is the latter, it is unconscious, and the production of consciousness from it becomes unintelligible. What is present in the effect has to be contained in the cause. When the effect is

consciousness, the cause cannot be unconsciousness, and if the cause is unconsciousness, the effect also would be of the same nature. Either the pure experience of James has to be identical with conscious, or it has to be admitted to be only the primordial condition of the manifestation of an empirical consciousness behind which there is a universal intelligence of which even the pure experience is a kind of object.

Consciousness is also held to be the result of aggregates of physical and physiological motions or external behaviour. This is tantamount to the materialist theory that consciousness can be a product or a mixture of unconscious elements. External behaviour observed in bodies moved by the nervous system cannot be supposed to be the source of consciousness. Behaviour is what is observed as a function of the psycho-physical organism, and not merely of the body. Behaviour is external, it is an object known; and the observer of the behaviour cannot be its product. It is consciousness that is presupposed even in the observation of the behaviour. What is called behaviour is the visible physical manifestation of the manner in which the internal psyche works through the instrumentality of the body and the nervous system. This controlling system is as much physical as the outer body, and so it cannot be the source of consciousness. The behaviourists think that sensations, perceptions, thoughts, emotions and the like are reducible to physical or physiological reflexes. But they forget that the physical and the physiological phenomena are external to consciousness and cannot be identified with it or considered to be its origin. Behaviour is regulated by

physical functions, while the reverse is not always the truth. Though it is true that the appearance of intellect or conscious functions is seen to be invariably concomitant with an observable behaviour of the nervous and the bodily expressions, it does not mean that consciousness is an effect of physical conditions. It is natural that external behaviour should appear simultaneously with a function of consciousness, as the former is governed by the latter, but it cannot be the cause of the latter. It is a wrong application of the scientific method of observation and experiment that has led to the belief that observable behaviour is the cause of all conscious operations. Consciousness is never observed, but is at the root of even the endeavour to conduct the observation or perform the experiment.

Psychoanalysis considers consciousness as only a partial censored expression of the vast reservoir of the unconscious which is the ultimate cause of all individual functions and activities. Intellectual activity is said to be an expression of hidden unconscious impulses. Consciousness and reason are subordinated to unconscious urges, cravings, appetites, all which are expressions of man's natural biological interests like sex, hunger, the instinct of self-preservation, love for power, etc. The essence of consciousness is thus traced back to the unconscious. The difficulty that the psychoanalyst presents is that even the existence of the unconscious is discovered only by the operations of consciousness. It was already observed that an unconscious cause cannot bring forth a conscious effort, for cause and effect are mutually related. What is not in the cause cannot be present in the effect. If the unconscious is devoid of the

element of consciousness, it cannot be the cause of consciousness. It may be considered that the individual consciousness and reason exhibit elements drawn from an unconscious matrix of instinctive urges, but the innermost consciousness that is behind the instinctive operations, even when rationalised, is not the same as the contents of the unconscious. If consciousness were an effect, it would be an object known externally; but we find that it ever remains the knowing subject of which everything else, even the unconscious, stands in the position of an object.

Consciousness is not a mere property, a quality or an attribute of the Self. If consciousness is a quality of the Self, what is the essential nature of the Self? It, then, should be different from consciousness, i.e., an unconscious entity. On such a supposition, we cannot account for the subject-nature of consciousness and the object-nature of all else. An attribute is not identical with the substance in which it inheres, and so the Self would stand apart as an object of consciousness. It is absurd to think that the Self can be an object, for if it were so, there would be no subject to know it. And yet this is what happens when consciousness is considered to be an adjective of the Self. All attempts to give the Self a tinge of objectivity end in failure, for it is impossible to distinguish between consciousness and the Self.

The Atman is different from activity, and has no relation to activity, for the latter is an external relation, and so non-eternal, while the Atman is eternal. There cannot be action without a spatial and temporal existence of its subject, but the Atman is non-spatial and non-temporal.

All actions modify their subject, while Atman is not subject to modification. Action can abide in an individual, but not in the Atman. There cannot be action without duality, a distinction between the agent, the action and its purpose, but the Atman is non-dual. The Atman is ever perfect, but action is an indication of imperfection, an effort to overcome an existing defect. The Atman is different from activities like desire, volition, etc., for they are as external and as much in need of the phenomenon of duality as physical actions.

Consciousness cannot be a property of the body, for the latter is its object. Consciousness is not subservient to its own object. The body never becomes the knower; it always remains the known. If consciousness were the essence of the body, then, as the essence of a thing cannot cease to be, there would be no death of the body, or its bereavement from consciousness. It is seen that the body is used as an instrument of action by internal conscious functions which are all illuminated by the Self. Further, on the assumption that consciousness is the essence of the body, there would not be a disintegration of the parts of the body, for consciousness cannot be divided. If it could be divided, a part of it would stand 'out there,' as an object capable of being perceived. But we see that this is never done. The body is inert and perishable, and its consciousness is borrowed from the Self through the mind and the senses.

The senses, again, are not conscious by themselves, for they are instruments of knowledge. The senses are objective and only bring about a relation of the subject with the object. An instrument is always used by another different

from it. The functions of the senses are diverse. The sensations which they carry have to be synthesised into perceptions and concepts by an intelligent principle different from them. If the senses are to be regarded as the Self, there would be many selves, and no knowledge of the kind 'I who see, smell and taste, also' etc. would be possible. Plurality cannot be explained without unity. Even when objects are destroyed and the senses are suspended, there remains the consciousness of one's having felt externality. Hence consciousness is not the senses. There is the knowledge: 'I am deaf, I am blind,' etc., which implies the existence of a common subject relating together the functions of the different senses. One can also imagine that the body and the senses are not, but one cannot think away self-consciousness. It is also observed that in the state of dream the sense-organs do not have their usual activity, and yet one's consciousness does not cease to be. The Self can never be diversified and changeful like the senses.

### **The Nature of the Atman**

The fact of the existence of an immutable consciousness is known from the implications of our experience in the three phenomenal states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. In the waking state, the individual identifies itself with the physical body and feels: 'I am the body.' If a question is put to a person as to who he is, he will normally describe the relative characteristics of his physical personality. This means that he feels his essence and existence to be identical with the visible gross vesture. But this assertion of the oneness of one's essence and existence

with the physical body is contradicted and disproved in dream. The individual in dream exists, and has various kinds of experience. But the physical body then is disconnected from consciousness. If we gently touch the body of a dreaming person, he will not be aware of this, our act of touching him. All his senses are deprived of consciousness when he is not awake. A few particles of sugar placed on the tongue, the organ of taste, of a person who is dreaming will not produce any conscious reaction from him. He will hear no sounds, see no forms, understand nothing. This shows that the real senses, the avenues of the perception of objects, are not the external organs of sense but certain internal forces which dissociate themselves from the physical body when one is in the state of dream. The fact that these forces responsible for the perception of the world are in conjunction with the body in the waking state explains sense-experience in waking life. And their disconnection from the body in the dreaming state accounts for the impossibility of having any physical experience in that state.

Now, is the dreaming person who is differentiated from his physical body in the dreaming state the real person identical with this body, or not? We are forced to believe that we are not in fact the physical body. Else, we would be in eternal conjunction with it, and we should experience it even in dream. But the fact being different we have to conclude that the real person is not identical with the physical body. Not even the dreaming person, nor even the dream-body can be identified with the highest reaches of consciousness. In deep sleep, even the dreaming personality



is separated from experience and there it appears to be nothing at all—not even fit to be equated with being. The person seems to be bereft of the value and content of all conscious experience. Everything that is known in the state of dream is cast aside and the personality withdraws itself from all objective conditions.

What, then, is the nature of the person who is the real experiencer of things? What is the ultimate principle underlying life in the state of deep sleep? We have, perforce, to admit, perhaps, that what is experienced in deep sleep is the ultimate reality. But are we prepared to accept this position? Are we conscious in that state? The answer is, no. We seem to be merely a mass of ignorance. Are we, then, ignorance essentially? Perhaps no one would agree with this proposition. Everyone instinctively feels that he is intelligent, not ignorant, not a bundle of stupidity or a bankrupt in understanding. Further, what is the experience which one has when one wakes up from deep sleep? One remembers that one had sound sleep, that one did exist even when fast asleep. How does one know one's existence in a state where there is no consciousness at all? This is possible due to the subsequent memory which one retains of having slept soundly previous to this conscious state of remembrance. But as remembrance or memory of anything is not possible unless that thing had been the object of one's conscious experience, we have to conclude that the experience of which we have a memory subsequently was one of consciousness sometime back. In other words, we had in the state of deep sleep conscious experience. But does this not contradict the blatant truth that we had no

consciousness whatsoever when we were asleep? Here we are led to a dilemma wherein with one breath we have to hold that we did not have any consciousness and also that we did have it at one and the same time.

We can extricate ourselves from this apparent quandary regarding the nature of consciousness in deep sleep by admitting that we existed as conscious *experiencers* then, though we did not have any such *experience*. This has to be admitted, for there is no other way of explaining this baffling predicament. But this absence of the experience of consciousness has to be explained. From the nature of the case we argue that consciousness must have been covered by some obstructing factor in deep sleep, but consciousness as such was never non-existent. If it had been non-existent, we could not have a memory of having slept soundly, i.e., our personality posterior to the state of deep sleep would have been entirely cut off from the preceding state. Consciousness seems to be a continuous element in our life. It persists in all states of experience. Even in swoon it exists. Even if we think that we are dead, it exists. Behind every thought, even the thought of the non-existence of everything, there is consciousness. Something exists. Something persists always. And even the one who denies the existence of all things does exist. Even the nihilist exists. Denial is preceded by the consciousness of denial. This conscious is the ultimate reality. It is the only existence, for it is the sole unchanging being which survives all change, surpasses all that we know, and while everything that we consider our own leaves us at some time or the other, it never deserts us. The essence of the personality and

individuality of man is consciousness. This is true existence. This alone can be eternal.

The following detailed account of the nature of Atman as Existence, Consciousness and Bliss is given by Swami Sivananda in his *Jnana-Yoga* (pp.137-146).

### **The Atman as Existence**

Sat is existence. It is what is in past, present and future alike, without a beginning, middle or end, unchanging in nature, not conditioned by space, time and causation, which endures during waking, dream and deep sleep, which is of the nature of one homogeneous essence. Such an existence can be only the Atman. Existence is not an attribute of the Atman, but is its essence. The Atman is not existent but existence. This general existence is commonly predicated of all things when we make statements like 'the table is, the cloth is, the pot is,' etc. It is our experience, rather an inherent feeling, that we never were not, and that we never shall cease to be, though our physical bodies may disappear. This feeling is a reflection of the existence of an eternal Atman in us. We all know that we are here in this world, that we exist, and this knowledge of existence asserts itself independent of all mental endeavour. We also know that our bodies exist. No one ever doubts the existence of one's body. But whence came this body? There must definitely be some cause for our acquiring this body, for it is observed to be an effect, constantly changing and pointing to something else by its modifications. It is well known that the body is a configuration or materialisation of the results of past Karma. It is our Karma that gives birth to

our body. The Karma which generated this body ought to have been performed through another body which existed in our past birth, for the present body cannot be the effect of the actions done through it in this birth. This very soul ought to have existed in the past life, too, which worked through the instrumentality of the body which existed prior to this; else, the soul in this birth could not experience the consequences of actions done in the past birth. The body of the past life, again, should be the result of actions done in a life anterior to the one that precedes the present. This very soul ought to exist in this life, also. Thus we are obliged to posit the existence of the Atman in the eternal past, by the contemplation of the fact that Karmas and bodies are beginningless, of the nature of an unceasing flow, the source of which is unknown. The Atman which subsists and forms the substratum for this change of past lives must be beginningless. Just as the seed which can generate a tree cannot generate the very same tree which is the cause of its birth, the works performed by the present body have to produce a new body in the next birth, but cannot be said to be the cause of this very body.

The Karma which generates our body belongs to us and not to others. One cannot enjoy the fruits of actions performed by another. Virtue and vice bring their own reward to the person who is their cause. The Karma that we perform now in this birth cannot go in vain, for every action produces a result which has necessarily to be experienced by the agent of the action. The power of an action is indestructible and will generate fresh bodies in the future. We will again do fresh Karmas with these new

bodies which will form the seed for bodies of a further future, and so on *ad infinitum*. Karma never ceases until the rise of the knowledge of the Self. In order to undergo the results of actions which appear in the form of a continuous change, the same soul has to be admitted to exist in the infinite future. The Atman, therefore, ought to exist as the underlying consciousness of the Jiva, equally in the past, present and future. The Atman is the only existence, and the outward phenomena of the world can have no existence of their own. The Atman is also eternal, as it is observed by an examination of the operation of the law of action and reaction. The Atman is absolute existence. It is the only reality.

### **The Atman as Consciousness**

Chit is consciousness. It shines by itself unaided by any other light and illumines the whole world by its light. It may be asked, how we can be said to illumine the world when we are ignorant, and when we receive light from outside. The universe, we know, is of two kinds, viz., the external and the internal. The external universe embraces the five elements, viz., ether, air, fire, water and earth with their properties of sound, touch, form, taste and smell and the combinations of these elements in various ways, in different names and forms possessing infinite qualities and shapes. The external universe being presented as an object to consciousness is observed to be inert. It cannot be the object of our perception unless we throw upon it the flood of the light of our consciousness. It is we that know the universe; the universe does not know us. The internal

universe consists of the five sheaths, viz., the physic, vital, mental, intellectual and the blissful; the three bodies, viz., the gross, subtle and causal; the six changes, viz., relativity of existence, birth, growth, change, decay and destruction; and the six waves in the ocean of Samsara, viz., birth and death, hunger and thirst, grief and delusion. This entire inward world, also, is inert, for it exhibits such a nature in the state of dreamless sleep, when the Atman shines independent of all external phenomena. This inward world, too, is external to the Atman and can never be identified with it. It is illuminated and known by the Atman. The only self-luminous consciousness is the Atman in us and in the world. It is by the light of the Atman that everything shines and appears to be possessed of intelligence. All things are in the position of the seen, while the Atman alone is the seer and the witness. Gold shines with splendour when molten and purified by fire in a crucible. Whence is this lustre in gold? It is not the fire that imparts this glitter to gold. Fire is only an instrument in removing the dross from the gold which existed in the ore. The luminosity of gold is inherent in itself; it is only manifest by the removal of the impurities in it through the action of fire. In the same manner, when the Brahmakara-Vritti dispels Ajnana, the Atman shines in its native glory and unsurpassed splendour. Even this power of dispelling ignorance is borrowed by the Vritti from the Atman alone. It is generally said that a lamp dispels darkness in a room; but the can, the oil or the wick has no power in itself, independently, to remove darkness. It is only when fire manifests itself in a combined action of these materials that there is the removal of darkness. In the

lamp of the body filled with the oil of Karma, the fire of the Atman lighting up the wick of the mind acquires the name of the Jiva and removes the darkness of ignorance. This power is really in the Atman and not in anything else. The Atman alone is real consciousness. The Upanishad declares: "There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars; there these lightnings do not shine; what to speak of this fire! Everything shines after Him that shines; all this is illuminated by His light."

### **The Atman as Bliss**

Ananda is bliss. It is what is eternal, uncaused and unexcelled. Bliss is the real nature of the Atman. The pleasure that we derive from objects, such as flowers, scents, women, etc. is temporary and subject to the limiting adjunct or vehicle of the five sheaths, and it has degrees. Such an inconstant character which is seen in the pleasure that is supposed to originate from the object cannot belong to the Atman. When a desired object is possessed and enjoyed, what really happens is that the mind which was previously hankering after the object, and was thus removed from the Self temporarily, ceases to function objectively on account of the feeling that the purpose of its externalised movement is fulfilled, and so, turning back to its source, which is the Atman, experiences the bliss thereof. The greatest happiness that man knows is in the state of deep sleep. Here the happiness is not caused by any external object, but is the spontaneous manifestation of the Atman. Hence the happiness of deep sleep is far superior to the other forms of happiness which one enjoys in the state

of waking. It is not mere absence of pain that one feels in deep sleep, but positive peace independent of all external causes. It is this happiness that everyone eagerly longs for above all pleasures, and one even dislikes those causes which may stand in the way of one's enjoying such happiness. One prepares soft beds, pillows, etc. to induce the mind to go to sleep. The bliss of the Atman has no degrees, while the relative happiness beginning from the state of man to that of Hiranyagarbha has degrees and admits of differences.

It may be argued that the bliss of dreamless sleep cannot be eternal, as we do not experience it in the states of waking and dream. But this is not so, for the bliss of the Atman which is fully manifest in dreamless sleep partially expresses itself through the psychoses of the mind in waking and dream also. But the spiritual bliss is not fully manifest in these two states, because it is restricted by the channels of the mental operations. The experience of the finite sense-pleasures obscures the ever-shining bliss of the Atman. Though the sense-pleasures caused by objects of desire seem to veil the bliss of the Atman, they really owe their origin to the Atman. This bliss shines unobstructed at all times, but it is not always known to be such on account of the modifications of the mind. The happiness born of contact with objects is known empirically, for here happiness is objectified. But the bliss of the Atman is not thus known, for in the Atman-experience one becomes the embodiment of bliss. Here one does not so much enjoy bliss as exist as bliss and know it eternally.



The love which people evince in regard to objects of desire is really an expression of the love for the infinite which is revealed through the objects. In objective love the infinite is summoning the infinite through a mental mode or Vritti. The bliss of the infinite which is the real object of love is not recognised due to the veiling of the consciousness by the Antahkarana-Vritti. The infinite is objectified, and it is the concentration of the mind on objectness that is the hideous error in all forms of love. True love is to point to the consciousness of the infinite which rests in itself without any objectification. The love which one has for one's wife, children, property, and the like, can be reduced and traced back to the basic love of one's self which is essentially universal. The pleasure that one wishes to have in one's own consciousness is the determinant of all forms of external love. The Atman is the supreme bliss, and it is sought wrongly in objects appearing in space and time. The Atman is dearer than wife, dearer than children, dearer than all else. Everything is lovable on account of the love of the Atman. This spiritual love gets, by way of conditioning, dissipated in objectified forms and temporal states. One's body is dearer than other objects. One's life is dearer than the limbs of the body. The Atman is the highest object of love, beyond which there is not anything. There are cases where people have desired death because of having to suffer unbearable pain. This shows that one's great desire is to overcome pain and enjoy unending freedom. As the Atman alone is indestructible, this freedom can be only in the Atman.

## **Sat, Chit and Ananda are One**

The essential nature of the Atman is realised to be Satchidananda or absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. These properties are not three different elements constituting the Atman. They form one indivisible whole. Existence is consciousness, and is bliss also. Consciousness is existence and bliss. Bliss is existence and consciousness. There cannot be any kind of limitation or division in Satchidananda. Limitation can be conceived of as being of three kinds: limitation by space, limitation by time and limitation by individuality. The body is limited by space. All objects of the world are of this nature, they are contained in space and divided by space. But space, being an effect, cannot condition the Atman which is the ultimate cause of all causes. Space has a beginning and an end, it originates at the time of creation, and is transcended in Self-realisation, and so it is not eternal. What is not eternal is different from the Atman, and can have no relation to it. The Atman is non-spatial. It is not also limited by time, as objects of the world are, for the time-process is but a consciousness of the succession of spatial events arisen in the temporary Vrittis of the internal organ. The Atman, being unconditioned by the mental processes, is beyond time. Whatever is conditioned by time is seen to be perishable, and so the Atman which is eternal ought to transcend time. The Atman is not limited by individualities or objects that fill the world and form its constituents. Limitation by individuality is of three kinds: limitation caused by the existence of a similar object, as the existence of a tree is limited by that of another tree; limitation caused by the

existence of a dissimilar object, as the existence of a tree is limited by that of a stone; limitation caused by the existence of internal variety or differentiation within oneself, as a tree is limited by its being differentiated into parts, such as trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, etc. The Atman is free from internal variety and external differentiation, for anything that has these limitations has to be contained in space and conditioned by time, and so perishable. The eternal Atman is untouched by the three kinds of limitation which characterises the objects of the world.

Even the concept of Satchidananda is a provisional and negative definition of the Atman provided as an intellectual prop for understanding and meditation. The Atman is, in fact, beyond even the concept of Satchidananda. The world is found to be lacking the character of Sat or reality, it is Asat or unreal; and so, in contradistinction from it, the Atman is said to be Sat or existence and reality. The world exhibits the nature of being Jada or inert, objective and changing; and so the Atman, as different from the world, is declared to be Chit or consciousness which is self-luminous. The world is of the nature of Duhkha or pain and misery, and so the Atman which is the opposite of it is said to be Ananda or bliss. Satchidananda is thus a concept of the Eternal, born out of the perception and experience of the unreal, unconscious and painful world. Strictly speaking, even the notion of the Atman as Satchidananda has the characteristic of an explanation by differentiation (Vyavartaka-Lakshana). The Atman, in reality, is beyond all definition—speech cannot express it, the mind cannot think it, the intellect cannot understand it, for all these

faculties are of the nature of effects. If we insist on being given a definition of the Atman, approximating to it and yet true, it has to be presented as supreme existence, supreme consciousness and supreme bliss. As the rope exists as the reality behind the snake which is superimposed on it, the Atman exists as the reality behind the world that is superimposed on it. As the self-luminous sun illumines the insentient objects, like a pot, the Atman by its self-effulgent nature illumines the whole insentient world. As nectar is delightful as different from poison which is of the nature of pain, the Atman is blissful as distinguished from the world which is filled with misery. The world is unreal like the snake in the rope, inert like a pot and painful like poison, while the Atman is real like the rope behind the snake, self-luminous like the sun and blissful like nectar.

Sat cannot be limited by another Sat, for there cannot be two Sats or existences. Existence is general. The moment existence is limited by another existence it takes the form of temporal becoming and cannot any more be existence. If Sat is limited by Asat or non-existence, there cannot be any conceivable limitation at all, for non-existence cannot cause any real limitation. Chit, again, cannot be said to be different from Sat, for if it were so, Chit would be the only existence, and Sat would become a phenomenal object of Chit, a mere mode of the existence of Chit. This argument proves that Chit is one with Sat. And as in the existence of consciousness or Chit there is no want of any kind, there being no limitation, it is also perfect freedom and bliss.

## Arguments for the Existence of the Atman

Some of the salient arguments advanced by Swami Sivananda in proving the existence of an eternal Self can be summarised as follows from his *Practice of Vedanta* (pp.23-37):

If one closes one's eyes and imagines for a moment that one is dead or is non-existent, one finds it impossible to do so. The body will be felt as lying down unconscious or dead outside, but one's consciousness of existence will persist. Consciousness cannot be destroyed. It remains as the eternal Self of the one who tries to deny it. No one feels 'I am not.' The existence of the Absolute is known on the ground of its being the Self of everyone.

All proofs are based on consciousness which itself requires no proof. The action of proving presupposes the indubitable presence of the Self. No argument is necessary to establish its existence, for it is the source of all thought and argumentation.

Every effect must have a cause. The changing character of the world shows that it is an effect. It must, therefore, have a cause which contains it wholly. The intelligence that is manifest in the world proves that its cause must be supremely intelligent and unchanging.

The thought of a finite thing implies the existence of the infinite. An idea of finitude cannot arise in the mind unless there is an unconscious acceptance of the presence of what transcends it. Duality presupposes unity. Mortality suggests the possibility of immortality. The relative establishes the Absolute.

Unless there exists a continuous principle equally related to the past, present and future, which cognises everything, we cannot account for remembrance, recognition, etc., which are subject to mental impressions, with reference to place, time and cause. The perception of universal continuity or the presence of the idea of universal causality can be explained only on the basis of an unchanging consciousness which is not itself involved in space, time and causation.

Every subject refers to itself as *Aham* or 'I.' The object is referred to as *Idam* or 'this.' From the point of view of the object it is not an object, but a subject. Objectness is attributed to things by the false ascription by the subject of an adjectival character to things seen outside and by arrogating to itself the position of a substantive. In fact, all things enjoy the character of being the *Aham* or the 'I.' Universal Selfhood is the reality. Objectness is the result of wrong perception caused by an abstraction from the Self of certain aspects of itself.

To break through the cycle of cause and effect one finds it necessary to look for an existence which is essentially changeless and does not depend upon anything second to it. As the senses can perceive only that which is conditioned by space, time and cause, the being transcending these conditions of perception should be supersensible, attributeless, non-individual, supermental, Consciousness.

The senses are not independent perceivers. They require the assistance of the mind in all forms of perception. They act as channels for the mind to function in the reception of knowledge from outside. The mind too

ceases to operate in the state of dreamless sleep, leaving the existence of the individual unaffected. The diverse phenomena experienced in the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep can acquire consistency and meaning only with reference to some permanent element within us, to which all the modifications of knowledge refer. It is the Self which hears, feels, sees, tastes and smells, dreams and knows the phenomenon of sleep, without itself undergoing any modification when these states constantly change themselves. The Self remains as the silent witness of all change.

The physical body cannot be considered to be the real 'I,' for it is seen that even if the legs or the hands or some other parts of the body are amputated, the 'I' remains still. The body is constituted of the inert elements and is dissociated from experience in dream. The senses, too, cannot be the 'I,' for they perform different functions independent of each other, and are synthesised by another unifying principle which cannot be attributed to any of the senses. The essence of the senses is activity, and activity is not being, and without the admission of being no activity can be explained. The vital energy or the Prana also is a state of motion. It is a process and not being. It is inert and has no consciousness. Further, it is seen that consciousness remains even when the vital breath is completely suspended. The mind, again, cannot be the Self, for it does not operate in deep sleep, though one exists in that state. The mind is not being but an activity, and so it cannot by itself account for continuity and uniformity in perception and experience. The mind is a bundle of ideas and is not

indivisible. The intellect suffers from the same defects as the mind. It is overcome by delusion, shocked and clouded very often, and even suspended many times. Even under these circumstances one's Self is seen to persist as an independent element. The intellect is a process of understanding and does not have the character of the Self. The causal body is a mass of ignorance which defies the qualities of intelligence that one always instinctively attributes to oneself. In this state of ignorance there is neither the experience of existence nor of consciousness, which two are the highest values giving meaning to life. Yogis experience in Samadhi a transcendence and overcoming of ignorance, a complete negation of the causal body. The Self reasserts itself in the act of denying it and of attributing its character to the not-self.

In addition to the names and forms of objects we see that they have the character of existence, revelation and causation of joy. The name and the form differ in different objects. They are not uniformly present in all things. But the properties of existence, knowledge and bliss are uniformly associated with an impartial perception of things. Even if an object is cut into pieces or reduced to powder, the existence-knowledge-bliss in it cannot be destroyed, though the name and the form may disappear. The reality of things is Satchidananda. Name and form belong to the world of sense, but Satchidananda remains as eternal being.

A person is loved not because of his body, but because of the Self within. One loves one's wife and children in and through the Self hidden in the body. If it had been the



physical body that was loved, one ought to love even the dead body which is in a cadaveric rigid state with ensuing decomposition. All values are cancelled when the Self is not associated with them.

One's love for oneself is superior to that which has for others. This fact will become clear when the phenomenon of love is examined carefully. It is directed to the Self ultimately and is subservient to the needs of the Self. Even the selfish love which one exhibits in regard to oneself when, for instance, one tries to save oneself when a house is on fire, by ignoring all property, is explicable only on the basis of the non-objective character of the Self. Even suicide committed on certain occasions proves only the intense attachment which one has to conditions that are supposed to bring satisfaction to the Self. The Self is the Adhishtana or the substratum of all.

The different senses perform functions in accordance with their individual structure and constitution. The eye sees forms, but cannot hear sounds; the ear hears sounds, but cannot see forms, and so on. But all the functions of the various senses are brought together in an integrated perception. It is the Self which sees, hears, etc., through the senses. The world is in the end nothing but the Self manifesting itself. It is the Self that perceives itself in its objectified form as the world. As there cannot be any relation between entities of dissimilar character, the communion of the subject and the object which is the precondition of perception proves that it is the Self that knows itself as others.

In dreamless sleep there are no senses, no objects and no mind, and yet there is the feeling of peace and bliss which is regarded as higher than all other kinds of happiness. How could there be such an intense bliss in sleep when there are no objects and no sensations? Only the Self which persists even in sleep can account for such wonderful experience.

All thought presupposes a thinker. And all thinking implies a consciousness of thinking. We can doubt the validity of all thoughts, feelings and volitions, but we cannot doubt that we doubt. The consciousness behind the act of doubting is not a matter of doubt. This is the Self.

It is seen that every action produces a reaction. Karmas bear fruit. But it is observed that many quit their bodies before enjoying the fructification of their actions. If their self does not continue to exist even after their death, there would be *Kritanasa* or destruction of merited results of actions. We also notice that there are persons in the world who suffer or enjoy certain states for no visible cause whatsoever. Some lead a happy life from their birth, while others suffer from childhood. If their self did not exist prior to the present birth of theirs, there would be *Akritabhyagama* or experience of unmerited results. The law of Karma makes us believe that the self ought to have existed eternally before the present birth of an individual, and should exist eternally even after death. The Self knows no cessation of itself.

We observe that many a time what one proposes is disposed otherwise in a manner over which one seems to have no control. There are events which occur independent

of human agency and appear to rule over human destiny. Individual caprice is overcome by a larger purpose. This clearly indicates that there is a superhuman power which controls and guides the world. The assertion of individuality brings in its train fear and misery, demonstrating thus the falsity of its character, while a movement towards the non-selfish end brings freedom and happiness, proving thereby the reality of a non-individual objective.

The ordinary man has no restraint over his mind and the senses. This shows that the director of the mind and the senses is different from the individual personality which subjects itself as a slave to these powers. The whole being of man is seen to be commanded and directed by motives and purposes which surpass human understanding. The Kenopanishad declares that the mind and the Prana, together with the senses, are impelled by a supremely intelligent being from within.

The senses appear to be the seers of the objects. But on careful analysis it is discovered that the mind is the seer of which even the senses are objects. A higher investigation of the conditions of unconsciousness, swoon, sleep and Samadhi brings out that the mind is not the real seer or experiencer. We are obliged to stumble upon a consciousness above the mind, to which even the mind is an object. Consciousness is the Self.

The objects seen are many, but the eye which sees them is one. The senses are many, but the mind which knows things through them is one. The mental functions are many, but the consciousness which holds them in unity is

one. There cannot be many consciousnesses, for if it were so, their difference would have to be known by another consciousness. Our last resort is an indivisibility of being.

Even when we deny all things by exposing the self-contradictory nature of their appearance and come to a void, as it were, as the only reality, we find that the assertion of this void requires a consciousness of there being a void. Consciousness is the subliminal essence of experience.

There is pain as long as a desire lurks in the mind and directs itself to an external object. The psychoses agitate the mind and peace ensues only when the psychosis of desire subsides on the possession and enjoyment of object of desire. The peace and joy that is thus felt is the consequence of the cessation of desire and the non-relatedness of the mind to external things, and not of the presence of certain pleasurable characters in them, as one ordinarily supposes; for it is seen that the object of one's love may be a thing evoking hatred in another, and even to one and the same person the same object may appear to be desirable as well as undesirable under different conditions of mind. Freedom and happiness are rooted in one's own Self, and all efforts to import them from outside prove futile.

The interval between the cessation of a desire and the rise of another desire is felt to be a state of joy. The joy does not come from outside but is the revelation of the truth within. If this state of resting in oneself continues for a long time one would experience a bliss which is higher than all the pleasures of the world.

Suppose there is a big light kept somewhere at night, and one happens to be standing at a distance from it. Suppose also that there stands between the observer and the light an obstruction, so that the observer cannot see the light. Yet he can see clearly the objects that are illumined by the light. Now, though one cannot see the light directly, one can conclude from the fact of the perception of objects that there must be a light somewhere on account of whose existence the objects are made visible. In a like manner, from the perception of the world with its variegated objects we infer the existence of the light of an intelligence by which alone will it be possible for us to account for the fact of perception.

A perfect law and order is seen to be working everywhere in the universe. Such uniformity as is observed in the operation of cosmic law can be accountable only if a unitary principle of consciousness exists as the unchanging substratum of the universe. Only an omniscient and omnipresent immanent principle existing everywhere can be responsible for the working of such a law.

When the sun has set, when the moon and the stars have set, when fire does not burn, when there is no lightning and no kind of light anywhere at night, one recognises oneself and identifies oneself with the light which is unique and which comes from one's own Self within. This light of the Self burns eternally.

When, as a punishment for a certain crime committed by a person, he is informed that a limb of his body is to be cut off, he would rather prefer to have his hands cut off than the eyes removed. And if the time comes for it he

would rather have his eyes removed than be executed. This indicates that the sense of knowledge is dearer to one than an organ of action. And dearer than even the senses is one's own life. One wishes to live forever at any cost, for life eternal is the nature of the Self. But when one suffers from a very serious disease, a protracted ailment of a painful nature, when one sees gloom, and misery everywhere ahead, one wishes to give up one's life, thereby demonstrating that happiness is superior to merely living somehow. The Self is not only eternal existence but eternal bliss.

The law of Karma and reincarnation establishes the eternity of the Self. The soul of man which survives after death remembers in the next astral life, through the force of Samskaras, certain conditions of its previous existence even after its separation from the physical body. The Society of Psychical Research has performed several experiments and has come to the conclusion that the soul exists after death and puts on an astral body which can materialise itself on the earth plane. There are cases where persons have correctly given information regarding several things pertaining to their previous life. The soul is imperishable.

Man generally argues at the time of his death: 'I have undergone many sufferings, troubles and difficulties in life. I have done various good deeds. They may not go in vain. After all, is it for this one life alone that I have laboured so much? This cannot be. I shall be paid what is due to me.' There is an urge from within which asserts itself in the form of an aspiration for immortal life. This immortal being is the Self.

Man was a child once playing on his mother's lap. Then he grew up into a school-going boy. Then he became an adolescent. He grew into an adult. Lastly he became a veteran with grey hair. Every moment of life there is change in the growth of the cells of the body. In spite of this incessant change in the constitution of the body one identifies oneself with the same personality. This is due to a continuous consciousness running through all change undergone by the body, without which there could not be a recognition of the personality. This consciousness persisting behind all change is the Self.

The philosopher Kant repudiates Hume's view that impressions and ideas are related to one another by the laws of association, by urging that the fact of the association of ideas points to a deeper unifying function of self, which he terms the 'transcendental unity of apperception.' Only this transcendental self should not be supposed to be totally abstracted from the empirical self. The former is immanent in the appearance of the latter. The aim of the empirical self is self-transcendence. "In order to do this, we must negate the merely individual self, which is not the true self. We must realise ourselves by sacrificing ourselves. The more fully we so realise ourselves, the more do we reach a universal point of view—i.e. a point of view from which our own private good is no more to us than the good of any one else" (*Mackenzie: Manual of Ethics*, p.274). Green observes that the relation of events to each other as in time implies their equal presence to a subject which is not in time. There could be no such thing as time if there were not a self-consciousness which is not in time.

## **Anvaya and Vyatireka**

The absolute independence of the Atman is proved by the method of synthesis and analysis, conjunction and disjunction, called Anvaya and Vyatireka. In his *Essence of Vedanta* (pp.147-149) Swami Sivananda gives the following description of this method:

Anvaya means the presence of one thing along with a particular another, and Vyatireka means its absence when that other is absent. It is synthesis and analysis (positive and negative method). The names and forms are different and unreal, but the one underlying essence of the Atman is the same in all forms. It is the only reality. The forms should be negated and the essence has to be grasped by meditation on the Atman. The Atman is to be separated from the five sheaths, just as one draws out the pith of the Munja grass or a reed. Just as one takes out the small diamond that is mixed with different kinds of pulses and cereals by separating it from them, this Atman is to be taken out by separating it from the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and blissful sheaths. Where these five sheaths exist, there the Atman also exists. Where these five sheaths do not exist, even there the Atman exists. Therefore, the Atman is independent of the five sheaths.

In the state of dream there is no consciousness of the existence of the material body, but the presence of the Atman is felt; as without the Atman it is not possible to have the consciousness of what occurs in a dream. It thus follows that in the state of dream there is the presence of the Atman and the absence of the material body. The coexistence of the Atman with the material body in the



waking state is called Anvaya and the non-coexistence of the material body with the Atman in the state of dream is called Vyatireka.

In the state of sound sleep one is not conscious of the existence of the subtle body, but the presence of the Atman is proved by the fact that, after waking, everyone has the consciousness that during sound sleep one was perfectly ignorant of everything. This consciousness is the result of previous experience, and in sound sleep there is no one else than the Atman to receive that experience. The coexistence of the Atman with the subtle body in waking and dream is called Anvaya, and the non-coexistence of the subtle body with the Atman in the state of sound sleep is called Vyatireka.

In the state of Samadhi, i.e. perfect absorption of thought in the one object of meditation, viz. the Supreme Self, there is the absence of the causal body, which is the same as ignorance, but the presence of the Atman or the Self is experienced. The coexistence of the Atman with the causal body in waking, dream and deep sleep is called Anvaya, and the non-coexistence of the causal body with the Atman in Samadhi is called Vyatireka. It has thus been shown that the Atman exists independently of the several bodies under certain conditions. It is an axiom that whatever exists apart from certain things is different from those things. The difference of the Atman from the three bodies means also its difference from the five sheaths, for the sheaths are contained in these bodies. The Atman is absolutely unconditioned and independent.

The Upanishads declare that the Atman is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unknown knower. One cannot see the seer of seeing, one cannot hear the hearer of hearing, one cannot know the knower of knowing. The Atman has neither a subject nor an object. The subject and the object are both comprehended in the Atman in which all divisions appear and which is raised above them all. The ego and the non-ego have only a practical but not absolute reality, for they are contained in and appear on the basis of the Atman-consciousness. Consciousness is unconditioned, not limited by space, time, causality or individuality. The Mandukya Upanishad describes the Atman as that which is not internally conscious of the subjective world, not that which is externally conscious of the objective world, not that which is conscious of both simultaneously, not that which is a mass of consciousness, not that which is mere consciousness, not that which is unconsciousness. It is declared to be invisible, unapproachable, ungraspable, indefinable, unthinkable, indescribable, the sole essence of the consciousness of the one Self, the cessation of all phenomena, the peaceful, the blissful, the non-dual. It is extolled as the fourth state of consciousness, for from the point of view of the empirical subject it is the fourth, as distinguished from its manifestations in the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep. Acharya Sankara, in his invocatory verses to his commentary on this Upanishad, refers to this Turiya-consciousness in the following terms:

“I bow to that Brahman, which, after having experienced the gross by pervading all objects with its all-pervading consciousness-rays entering into the variety of all

that is movable and immovable, and after again having drunk deep within itself all creations of the internal organ of knowledge propelled by the impressions of desires, sleeps ever soundly enjoying the sweetness of bliss, yet causing the fruition to us through Maya, and which, from the point of view of Maya, is reckoned as the fourth (state of consciousness). May that, the fourth, which, as the waking self, experiences the results of its actions in the form of gross objects, and then also the subtle ones called into being by its internal organs of knowledge and illumined by its own light, and lastly having drawn all these by degrees within itself, and casting aside all particularities, exists as the One free from all attributes—may this protect us!”

## **CHAPTER V: THE THEORY OF PERCEPTION**

### **The Perceptive Apparatus**

Perception is a process of the consciousness of an object. It is one of the means of valid knowledge in the world and consists in an inseparable relation of the perceptive consciousness with its content. The objects that are seen in the world are considered by the common man to be existing outside his body and the senses, and he feels that the objects are reflected, as it were, in his mind in perception. The object itself does not enter the eye, for example, in the act of seeing, but there is a transmission of vibration from the object, with which his consciousness comes in contact, which becomes a content of his consciousness, and on account of which he is said to know the existence of the external object. This perception is caused by the operations of a mind whose existence as a mediator between the Atman within and the object outside is evident from the fact of the synthesis of sensations and of the possibility of the absence of perception at certain times. "Sense-knowledge is the product of the connection between the mind and the sensory organs. That is why there is no simultaneity of the knowledge of the impressions received through the various sensory organs. People say: 'My mind was elsewhere, I did not see that.' The impossibility of this simultaneity of knowledge through various sensory organs is an indication of the existence of the mind." "Between the Atman and the organs of sense a connecting link is necessary. If we do not admit the internal organ, there would result either perpetual perception or perpetual non-perception, the former when there is a conjunction of the

Atman, the senses and the object, the three constituting the causes of perception, and the latter when, even on the conjunction of these three causes, the effect did not follow. But neither is the truth. We have, therefore, to acknowledge the existence of an internal organ on whose attention and non-attention perception and non-perception take place” (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 188*). “The mind is with parts and can move in space. It is a changing and differentiating thing. It is capable of moving from place to place and assuming the forms of the objects of perception. This going out to an object and taking its shape is actual. There is nothing static in Nature. Every modification of the root Natural Principle is active and moving. The mind, in particular, is always undergoing conscious and unconscious modifications. The mind is a radiant, transparent and light substance and can travel like a ray of light outside through a sense-organ. The mind is thus an active force, a form of the general active Power or Sakti. As the brain, the organ of the mind, is enclosed in an organic envelope, solid and in appearance closed, the imagination has a tendency to picture it as being isolated from the exterior world, though in truth it is in constant contact with it through a subtle and constant exchange of secret activities. The mind is not something static, passive and merely receptive. It takes an active part in perception both by reason of its activity and the nature of that activity as caused by its latent tendencies (Samskaras). The following well-known illustration from the *Vedanta-paribhasha* gives an account of the nature of perception: ‘As water from a tank may flow through a channel into a plot of land and assume its shape (square,

triangular or any other form), so the radiant mind (Taijasa-Antahkarana) goes out through the eye or any other sense-organ to the place where an object is, and gets transformed into the shape of that object. This modification of the mind-stuff is called a Vritti” (*Practice of Yoga: Vol. I, pp. 107-108*).

In his *Sure Ways of Success in Life* (pp. 94-99) Swami Sivananda gives an analysis of the apparatus of perception in the following manner:

The senses are the gatekeepers of the wonderful factory of the mind. They bring into the mental factory matter for manufacture. Light vibrations, sound vibrations, and the like, are brought inside through these avenues. The sensations are first converted into percepts by the mind, which then presents these percepts to the intellect. The intellect converts these percepts into concepts or ideas. Just as raw sugarcane juice is treated with so many chemicals and passes through various settling tanks, and is packed as pure crystals; just as ordinary clay mixed and treated with plaster of Paris, etc. passes through settling tanks and is made into jugs, jars, plates, cups, etc.; just as crude sand is turned into beautiful glassware of various sorts in a glass factory; so mere light vibrations, sound vibrations, etc. are turned into powerful ideas or concepts of various descriptions in the factory of the mind.

The external senses are only instruments in the process of perception. The real auditory, tactile, visual, gustatory and olfactory centres are in the brain and in the astral body. These centres are the real senses which make perception possible. The intellect (Buddhi) receives material from the

mind and presents them to the Purusha or the Atman which is behind the screen. The intellect is like the prime minister; it is closer to the Purusha than the mind is. As soon as facts are placed by the intellect before the Purusha, there flashes out egoism (Ahamkara). The intellect receives back the message from the Purusha, decides and determines, and transmits it to the mind for the execution of orders. The external organs of action carry out the orders of the master.

The Antahkarana (inner psychical instrument) is a broad term which includes the intellect, the ego, the memory, the subconscious and the conscious mind. The one Antahkarana assumes all these names due to its different functions, just as a person is called a judge when he dispenses justice in a law court, a president when he presides over a society or an association, a chairman when he superintends over a meeting, and a storekeeper when he is in charge of goods. If one can clairvoyantly visualise the inner working of this mental factory one will be dumbfounded. Just as in the telephone exchange of a big city various messages come from diverse houses and firms to the central station, and the central operator plugs, connects and disconnects the various switches, so does the mind plug, connect and disconnect sensory messages. When one wants to see an object the mind puts a plug into the other four centres, viz. hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling. When one wants to hear something the mind plugs similarly the remaining four centres. The mind works with a speed which is unimaginable.

In ordinary persons the mental images are distracted and undefined. Every thought has an image, a form or a shape. A table is a mental image plus an external *something*. Whatever one sees outside has its counterpart in one's mind. The pupil of the eye is a small round construction. The retina is limited in its structure. How is it that the image of a huge mountain seen through such a small aperture is cast in the mind? How does this colossal form enter the tiny hole in the eye? The fact is that the image of the mountain already exists in the mind. Here Swami Sivananda brings out the significant truth that the limited sense-organs are able to cast the image of an extensive scene on the limited mind working in a body on account of the essentially omnipresent and all-comprehensive character of the consciousness that is reflected through the mind. All perception suggests the marvellous working of this immanent consciousness through the instrumentality of the mind, and later through the senses. The real seer and the sener of things is this consciousness which is at the background of the perceiving subject as its existence and essence. The ultimate knower of the world is an absolute being whose presence is established by the nature of knowledge itself. "In order to know the world fully, the knower must be independent of the laws governing the world; else, knowledge complete would be impossible. One whose knowledge is controlled by external phenomena can never have real knowledge of them. The impulse for absolute knowledge guarantees the possibility of such a knowledge. This shows that the knower is superior to the known to such an extent that the known loses its value as



being, in the light of the absoluteness of the knower” (*Gita Meditations: p. ix*).

#### Perception According to the Sankhya and the Vedanta

According to the Sankhya system the stimulus for perception is provided by the existence of a real object outside. In right perception a real object which is outside is presented to the perceptive consciousness. The object of right perception is not an illusion, but real, and has practical value. The senses give a direct apprehension of truly existent objects of which one becomes aware in right perception. The senses afford only an indeterminate perception of the object, a mere immediacy of objectivity, in the form of ‘This is an object.’ This can be said to be bare abstract perception. Concrete and determinate perception of the nature of ‘I know the object’ takes place further inside in the Antahkarana. The mind contemplates on the material supplied by the senses and gives it order and definiteness by the act of synthesis and deliberation on its part. Here arises the definite perception of the object as being of this or not this kind. Even here the process of perception does not come to an end. The Ahamkara or the individual ego arrogates to itself this resultant function of the mind and transforms the impersonal perception of the mind into a personal knowledge. This empirical principle of individuality with its natural character of the unity of apperception makes the perception refer to a particular individual. The Buddhi or the intellect decides on the nature of the perception of the ego and determines the course of action to be taken in regard to it. The understanding of the Buddhi is followed by a will or a

determination to act. The seeds of one's reaction to the perceived object are sown in the consciousness of the Buddhi. Finally the Sankhya holds that this perception and volition are experienced by the Purusha which is in relation to the Buddhi. It is the Purusha that gives to the Buddhi the intelligence to understand and decide. The ultimate possibility and validity of perception is thus based on the consciousness of the Purusha.

There is a striking similarity between the Sankhya theory of perception and the epistemological analysis made by Kant. According to Kant the manifold of sensations is transformed into perceptions and conceptions by the mind by means of the perceptual categories and the conceptual categories with their judgments. The perception is referred to the unity of the ego and converted into personal knowledge. The intellect classes the perception under its categories together with those of space and time. The transcendental unity of the ego to which all experience is referred is responsible for the synthesis of knowledge which is made available to the perceiver. In Kant, however, the order is brought about in the sensations directly by the mind or the understanding, while in the Sankhya the manifold of sensations undergoes the process of synthesis gradually through the mind, the ego and the intellect. To Kant space and time are perceptual categories, but to the Sankhya they are conceptual categories. Both Kant and the Sankhya hold that knowledge is caused by the joint action of the senses and the internal organ presided over by the intellect. Paraphrasing the analysis of the Sankhya, Swami Sivananda observes: "The fleshy eyes are only the external

instruments of perception. They are not the organ of vision. The organ of vision is a centre situated in the brain. So is the case with all the senses. The mind is connected with the senses, the senses with the corresponding centres in the brain and these centres with the physical organs in the direction of the external object. The mind presents the sensation to the ego and the intellect (Buddhi); the intellect takes it to the Self (Purusha) which is pure Spirit and is immaterial. Now real perception takes place. The Purusha gives orders back to the motor centres or organs of action for execution through the intellect, ego and the mind” (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 248*).

According to the Sankhya theory of knowledge, the validity or the invalidity of knowledge is self-evident and does not stand in need of any external conditions. These characters are inherent in the nature of knowledge itself. The Buddhists hold that knowledge is invalid intrinsically, but enjoys the nature of validity due to conjunction with external conditions. The Nyaya affirms that the validity and the invalidity of knowledge are both determined by external conditions and have nothing of the intrinsic in them. The Mimamsa recognises, however, with the Vedanta system, that knowledge is intrinsically valid, that it cannot be validated by any other factor external to it, and that the invalidity of certain forms of knowledge is due to conditions external to knowledge. Knowledge knows its own validity, and this is made possible by the essential nature of its cause which is not tainted by imperfection of any kind, while the determining factor in the ascertainment of invalid knowledge is the knowledge of a contradicting

element or defect in the cause of the rise of knowledge. In perception there is first the illumination of the mind by the Consciousness, then the activation of the senses by the mind, and thirdly the contact of the senses with the external object. In order that perception may be right and not erroneous, there should be no defect either in the operation of the mind, the activity of the senses or the manner of the location of the object. The presence of the current of an unceasing consciousness linking up these different elements contributing to perception makes perception possible.

The Vedanta theory of perception is explained by the existence of a universal consciousness in which appears the empirical distinction of subject and object, mediated by a process of knowledge. According to the Vedanta the only reality is the Atman or Brahman, which is supreme consciousness, and hence neither the subject nor the object nor their relation can exist outside it. They are all apparent modes superimposed on its transcendent being. This universal consciousness is modalised in empirical perception in three ways: Vishayachaitanya or the consciousness appearing under the mode of the external object, which may be termed object-consciousness; Pramanachaitanya or the consciousness appearing with the modes of the mental psychosis acting as the cognitive consciousness; and Pramatrachaitanya or the consciousness appearing through the mode of the Antahkarana, and existing as the cognising consciousness. All these three modes are really the one universal consciousness of the Atman appearing to be conditioned by the object, the

psychosis and the internal organ itself. When the one consciousness passes through these three relative modes valid for empirical existence, it goes by the names and the forms put on by these modes. The indeterminable Absolute gets determined, as it were, by the three terms of the process, all which rise simultaneously in the act of perception. According to Vasubandhu, the Buddhist teacher, consciousness which is the ultimate reality undergoes a threefold transformation: an inner indeterminate change (Vipaka), the inner psychological change causing the operations of the mind (Manana), and the objective change of consciousness of sense-objects (Vishaya-Vijnapti). The first potential change corresponds to the original creative will giving rise to the latter two forms of modification into subject and object. It is this threefold transformation of cause that is responsible for the distinction that is ordinarily made between subject and object. The principle of consciousness which seems to put on these changes is the Alayavijnana, the repository-consciousness, the ground of the appearances of all knowers and known objects, which, in its pure unmodified state, is identified with Sarvajnata or omniscience and Vijnaptimatratra or mere awareness. The Alayavijnana is the Dharmakaya of the Buddha, the primeval condition in which Dharmas or appearances transcend their limitations.

“According to Western medical science, light vibrations from outside strike the retina and an inverted image is formed there. These vibrations are carried through the optic tract and optic thalamus to the centre of vision in the occipital lobe of the brain in the hind part of the head.

There a positive image is formed. Only then we see the object in front of us. The Vedanta theory of perception is that the mind comes out through the eye and assumes the shape of the object outside” (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 70*). For all perception a Vritti or a psychosis of the Antahkarana (the internal organ) is necessary, since perception is possible only when the universal consciousness is individualised by a limiting adjunct. A Vritti is a function of the Antahkarana and is really indistinguishable from the latter. The Pramatrachaitanya or the consciousness conditioned by the Antahkarana is said to flow like a ray of light to the object outside and take the form of the object by pervading it. As a molten metal cast in a mould takes the shape of the mould, or the water that flows into a field takes the shape of the field, or as the space enclosed in a vessel in the house is unified with that enclosed within the house, the mind takes the form of the object which it pervades. This pervasion of the object by the mental Vritti is called Vritti-vyapti. “The Antahkarana-vritti (mode of the internal organ) enters through the opening of the eye, removes Vishaya-ajnana (ignorance in regard to the objects), assumes Vishaya-akara (the shape and form of the objects it envelops), and presents the objects to our view. The function of the Vritti is to cause Avaranabhanga (removal of the veil or layer of ignorance that envelops all objects)” (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 69*). “Vritti-vyapti is the pervasion of the psychosis or the mental modification over an object in the process of the perception of something external. Phalavyapti is the pervasion of the effect or the consciousness of the Self

which follows the Vritti in the process of perception” (*Questions And Answers: p. 87*). In Vritti-vyapti or the pervasion of the psychosis over an object the Tula-avidya or the derivative ignorance covering the objects is lifted by perceptive knowledge. The range of the Vritti, however, is limited like that of a ray of light, and is not infinite. The Vritti that pervades the object determines thus the perception of the empirical mode of the object, but does not illumine it, for the Vritti by itself is insentient. The knowledge which illuminates the perception is not a part of the mental Vritti, the function of Vritti-vyapti being merely to pervade the form of the object and cast that form in the mental mould. The Vritti-vyapti has to be illuminated by the consciousness determined by the reflection of the Atman in the mind, in order that there may be knowledge in the act of perception. It is the consciousness of the Atman that illumines the Vritti, and it is the transparency of the Vritti and its proximity to the Atman that makes perception possible, e.g. in the form of ‘I perceive the object.’ This resultant pervasion of the object by consciousness through the Vritti is called Phala-vyapti. The Pramatri-chaitanya (cognising consciousness) moving out as Pramana-chaitanya (cognitive consciousness) thus gets identified with the Vishayachaitanya (object-consciousness) on which the object is superimposed. This identification is possible, because the essential consciousness that underlies the Pramatri, Pramana and Vishaya, as their reality, is one and the same. The three modes are only phenomena in the universal consciousness. The consciousness determined by the individuality of the

object is appropriated to the consciousness determined by the Vritti which takes the form the object by pervading it. This consciousness conditioned by the Vritti is again unified with the consciousness defined by the mind or the Antahkarana. Thus the subject knows the object through a relational consciousness. The rise of the cognitive psychosis illumined by the consciousness is accounted for by the physical vibrations which are transmitted to the sense-organs by means of auxiliary causes such as light rays, the proximity of the sense organs to the objects, etc. Swami Sivananda sums up the principal elements of this process in the following statement:

“The mind assumes the shape of any object it intensely thinks upon.” “When you pass through a mango garden, a ray of the mind comes out through the eye and envelops the mango. It assumes the shape of the mango. The ray is termed a Vritti. The enveloping process is called Vritti-vyapti. The function of a Vritti is to remove the Avarana (veil) that envelops the object and the Upahita-chaitanya (consciousness defined by an adjunct). The veil that envelops the mango is removed by the Vritti or the mental ray. There is Chaitanya (consciousness) associated with the Vritti. This Chaitanya illuminates the object ‘mango.’ This result is termed Phala-vyapti. Just as a torch-light illuminates an object in a flash, this Vritti-chaitanya (consciousness conditioned by the mental mode) illumines the object. Only then does perception of the mango take place” (*Mind and Its Mysteries: P. 194*). “According to the Advaita theory of perception, it is the Chaitanya within us that makes perception possible. The Chetana (intelligence)



within us unites with the Chetana (intelligence) in the object, and the result is perception. It does not follow from this that the mind and the senses are useless,.....for they serve the purpose of determining the special object of each sense” (*Ibid*, p. 205).

In abstract and indeterminate perception there is said to be only an identification of the Pramanachaitanya with the Vishayachaitanya, whereas in concrete and determinate perception there is, in addition to this fact, the identification of the Pramanachaitanya with the Pramatrachaitanya. When this latter identification takes place, the egoistic individual appropriates the perception to himself and thus distinguishes it from the perception of the object by others. Though the object and the subject are spatially divided and so cannot have ordinarily any relation to each other, the consciousness underlying the universe which is made manifest through the transparent Antahkarana brings about a consciousness of objective perception. The existence of the object in essence is the same as the existence of the subject in essence. There is one existence-consciousness in the whole universe, which knows itself through itself in all perceptual processes; but this truth is not explicit to the individual in bondage, due to his being overpowered by Avidya and Kama. In fact, the essential consciousness in the object is not different from that in the cognitive Vritti, which, again, is not different from that which is implicit in the subjective mode. The knowledge of the object is given to the subject on account of its essential identity with the object. As the consciousness of the Atman is not in union with the real consciousness in

the object, there is no intuitive perception of the identity of the essence of the object with the universal knowing subject. There is only the psychical consciousness, reflected and limited through the phenomenal mode of the Antahkarana, which gets identified with the objective mode of the Vishayachaitanya. Hence there is only objective consciousness and not unity-consciousness. "Knowledge comes through contact of the senses with objects. The objects come in contact with the senses. The senses are linked to the mind. The mind is connected to the Atman. The Atman illumines these" (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 246*). "The mind is formed out of the Sattvika portion of the five Tanmatras (subtle rudimentary principles out of which the gross elements are formed). There is light outside. The sun also emits light. The eye is made up of Agni-Tattva (fire-principle). That portion of the mind which perceives (through the eyes) is also made up of this fire-principle. So fire sees fire. Only that portion of the mind which is made up of Sabda-Tanmatra (the subtle principle of sound) can hear. Sound comes from Akasa (ether) outside. So the Akasa in the mind hears the Akasa from outside. But the Atman can see, hear, taste and feel everything. The Atman alone can be seen by the Atman. Therefore, whatever we see outside is only the Atman" (*Ibid, p. 72*). The consciousness of the oneness of the object and the subject can arise only in the realisation of the Atman.

### **Consciousness Behind Relation**

The relation between the knower and the known in perception must be a conscious one, as any element of

unconsciousness could not bring about knowledge of an object. And further, objects with dissimilar characters cannot commingle with each other and become one. Hence the cause of the relation of the subject and the object in perception ought to be a consciousness lying as the common ground of the subject, the object and their relation. Unless there is a spiritual background supporting the object, which, at the same time, is also the background of the subject and its union with the object, there can be no possibility of knowledge. If there were no consciousness behind the existence of the object, there could be no contact of a conscious subject with it, for consciousness does not mix with unconscious entities. Either the subject and the object are both phases of consciousness or they are mere physical bodies. In the former case there can be perceptive knowledge by relation, while in the latter the whole world would be blind darkness. But it is seen that the world is not shrouded in darkness, there is intelligence and perception, which proves that there ought to be an independent consciousness appearing as the knower, the knowledge and the known, all at once, in the process of perception. Reality is neither the subject nor the object, but a consciousness immanent in and yet transcending both.

This analysis of the perception gives us a clue to the understanding of the world as a whole. The world consists of experiencers and objects that are experienced, or capable of being experienced, and nothing but these exist anywhere in it. If the relation between the experiencer and the experienced is, as it has been shown, a spiritual consciousness, there can only be a spiritual relation existing

everywhere in the world. The world is aglow with consciousness and is inseparable from it (*Vide, Essence of Vedanta: pp. xxi-xxv*).

In external perception the object is not created by the cognitive consciousness of the subject, but is only known by it as revealed through the senses. The object is a mode not of the Pramatrīchaitanya but of Brahmachaitanya, which is the substratum of even the modal appearance of the subject. The subject, thus, is on par with the object in the degree of reality enjoyed by it. The existence of the object is rooted in the existence of the universal consciousness on which the objectness of the object is superimposed, and the existence of the subject, too, is the same consciousness on which the subjectness of the subject is superimposed. The subject and the object are, therefore, one in essence. This metaphysical identity of the ultimate realities of the subject and the object is empirically construed in ordinary sense-perception, and so it becomes in the state of individuality the cause of attachment or aversion on the part of the subject in relation to the object by way of transferring the empirical appearance of the object to the empirical appearance of the subject. Sense-perception is thus the consciousness of an identity in difference, a perception of the object as different from the subject, together with the consciousness of its relation to the subject by way of a mysterious uniting link. This identity-consciousness owes its existence to the universal Self, and the difference-consciousness is caused by its being modalised, restricted and reflected in the Vritti of the Antahkarana. As there are many Antahkaranas qualifying different individuals and

limiting their existences, the empirical perception of one individual is different from that of another, though one and the same object may become the content of the experiences of several individuals.

“Perception through the finite mind or cognition or experience takes place serially and not simultaneously. Simultaneous knowledge can be had only in Nirvikalpa Samadhi where past and future merge in the present. Only a Yogi will have simultaneous knowledge. A man of the world with a finite mind can have only a knowledge in succession. Though several objects may come in contact simultaneously with the different sense-organs, yet the mind acts like a gate-keeper who can admit only one person at a time through the gate. The mind can send only one kind of sensation at a time into the mental factory for the manufacture of a decent percept and a nice concept” (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 167*). The Antahkarana cannot by its very nature apply itself to all things at once, for its operation is limited to particular objects and to certain definite given conditions. When these conditions are not fulfilled, and also when the range of the objects extends beyond the field of the operation of the Antahkarana functioning through the senses, there can be no real or correct perception, definite and concrete. The perceiver is not really identical with the object perceived, as the two are cut off from each other by the space-time mode which causes the natural and observable division between empirical objects. On account of this division the individual finds it impossible to know all things simultaneously and in their true essence. Individualistic knowledge is confined to

the functions of the Vrittis of the Antahkarana defining and limiting it. The objects that are perceived are not revealed in their essential constitution and reality. What we call correct perception is no doubt valid for all practical purposes in life, as it corresponds to facts that can be verified by observation, coheres with the perceptions of the different senses and with the experiences of other people, and also as it is seen to lead one to successful activity and therefore to possess the character of practical efficiency. But the objects known in empirical perception are not revealed in their true nature, for even correct perception in this sense is liable to sublation in a transcendent state. What does not allow empirical knowledge to be ultimately valid for all times is the defect in its supposed immediateness and the sensory separability of the subject and the object. The knower, in this kind of knowledge, is a reflection of the Atman through the Antahkarana-Vritti, and so it does not correspond to the non-mediate knowledge of the Atman which is its unaffected original. The object of empirical knowledge is, likewise, a physical mode of the universal consciousness and so does not correspond to its eternal reality which is the same as the Atman. Only when knowledge takes the form of an infinite self-illumination as one with the Atman, including the subject and all the objects, and transcending the relation of mediacy which infects all perception in the world can there be unsublatable knowledge of the true nature of things. Isvara has an instantaneous knowledge of all things in their eternal nature, for His defining adjunct, being universal in its nature, and being the material cause of everything, contains

non-mediate the roots of all things in itself. And Isvara's consciousness which is inseparably related to His power is at once the existence and knowledge of all things. Isvara has an original knowledge of the universe, for the medium of His knowledge is the primary cause of all things, while the medium of the individual's knowledge is a secondary offshoot of the universal material cause, and so it has only a secondary and mediate knowledge of the externally existing objects contained in the original immediately and primarily. Isvara is omniscient and omnipotent due to His omnipresence and non-individualised existence, while the knowledge and power of the individual are faint and distorted due to its localised appearance. Isvara's knowledge of the universe is intuitive, direct and eternal, while the individual's knowledge is perceptual, externalised and temporal. The Atman is Brahman, and so it is the explanation of the knowledge of both Jiva and Isvara.

### **Internal Perception**

The object of a Vritti or a mental mode may either be an external object or an internal content, something outside the mode or the mode itself. Perception is the unification of the Vishayachaitanya with the Pramatrachaitanya through the operation of the Vritti. In perception the functioning of the sense-organs is not absolutely necessary, it is not an unavoidable condition of perception. Whether there is the operation of the senses or not, when there is an identity brought about between the consciousness particularised by the object and that modified by the Vritti, there is admitted to be perception. Right perception is to be defined as the

union of the Pramanachaitanya and the Vishayachaitanya in the case of a Vishaya or object which is fit to be known, or capable of being known, and wherein there is the spatial coexistence of the Pramanachaitanya and the Vishayachaitanya, together with the contemporaneity of the two. In internal perception, like that of pleasure and pain, for example, the limiting conditions of the object, i.e. pleasure or pain, and the mental mode experiencing it, get identified at one and the same place and the same time. The identity of the object and the subject in internal perception is, as far as this fact is concerned, the same as in the case of external perception. The substratum of the subject and the object in internal perception is one and the same, viz. the internal organs as modes in the universal consciousness. In the external perception of an object the mental mode flows out through the channels of the senses to the object outside, pervades it by Vritti-vyapti and causes the illumination of the object by lifting its Tula-avidya, by means of the Sakshichaitanya or the Witness-consciousness that is illuminating the mental mode, thus bringing about Phala-vyapti or conscious perception of the object. In internal perception the mental mode does not move towards any object, for here the object is the mode itself directly illumined by the Sakshichaitanya. Internal perception is caused by Vrittis or mental modes corresponding to the modes of these percepts. But the Vrittis themselves are self-luminous and do not require another Vritti to illumine or cognise them. The assumption or introduction of some other Vritti for the cognition of the internal modes may lead to an infinite regress of Vrittis behind Vrittis. The



Vrittis should be admitted to be self-luminous, capable of being cognised directly by the Witness-consciousness defined by the Antahkarana. Pleasure and pain are known through the Vrittis, but the latter are known immediately by the Witness-consciousness through the mind. This immediate cognition of the Vrittis by the Witness is not without its being associated with the Antahkarana and its limitations. The cognition of the Vrittis by the Witness is immediate in the sense that here the senses are not needed as media of knowledge. Though there is no second Vritti by which the Witness may know the object of internal cognition, it is associated with the Vritti by which the objects are known. The Vritti of pleasure or pain, for instance, is an object as well as a subject. It perceives itself non-mediate. Empirical perception can occur only of individualised objects, and so such perception is not possible either of the universal Atman or of mere negation or non-existence. "In the case of internal cognition, i.e. awareness of the mental modifications, Vritti-vyapti takes the form of remembrance or inference, because here no perception of an external object is necessary. In Brahman, however, there is no Phala-vyapti, because Brahman does not require another light to illumine itself" (*Questions And Answers: p. 87*).

### **The Nature of Truth**

An empirical perception is to be regarded as true when it stands the test of correspondence, coherence and practical efficiency, and is capable of satisfying the principle of non-contradiction. According to the correspondence

theory, truth is a relation between an idea and its objective content. The idea of an object should correspond or agree with the content of perception. Realists hold that truth is independent of human cognition and remains unaffected by it. Reality does not depend upon our perception of it. Truth is here fidelity to reality, agreement with fact. According to the coherence theory of truth, truth is the relation of consistency or internal coherence between all parts of our experience. Truth depends upon the harmonious constitution of consistency of the different constituents of a proposition or judgment with the parts constituting truth. Logical coherence is the criterion of truth, and not mere agreement of idea with fact. The pragmatic theory of truth leans on practical efficiency, workability in experience, what leads to satisfactory consequences, what is useful in practice and life. Truth is valid. What works as truth or satisfies us as truth is to be considered as truth for all human purposes. It is true that there cannot be correct perception unless there is a real object outside, to which our knowledge may correspond. But correspondence is not the only criterion of truth, for there can be correspondence even in the case of partial truths or even errors. Correspondence has to be testified by the principle of coherence or the organic nature of knowledge, which satisfies consistently the perceptions of the different sense-organs and agrees with similar perceptions of the object by others. Truth also has the character of practical efficiency or workability in actual life. Though the workable need not necessarily be true, the true is always workable. Though utility is not the test of truth,

truth has always the utility that is unique to its nature. All these tests, however, are based on the fact of the self-evident and perfectly valid nature of one's self-consciousness. Consciousness is its own test and proof, and it exists as the basis of all proofs. The reality of the silver seen in nacre is nacre, and the reality of nacre is the universal consciousness. The reality of dream perception is rooted in the waking consciousness of the individual, and the reality of this latter is the Turiya or the Atman. The truth of an object should correspond with its essential nature. But no human idea or concept can correspond to the reality of the Atman or Brahman, for here no relational category can be introduced into knowledge. Empirical tests of truth cannot be applied to it, for all these tests are based on the notion of duality, while the Atman is non-dual, is its own proof and validity, and the test of its experience is its self-evident nature. This is the only experience which is ultimately non-contradicted and so the ultimate truth. In this highest being of consciousness the knower and the known are one, and in it all logical tests lose their significance.

For all purposes of life, an object of correct perception by the Pramatrīchaitanya is real and has an existence of its own leading to successful activity, corresponding to empirical facts and cohering with the perceptions of others in regard to it. But it has to be added here that what satisfies these tests of truth need not be absolutely real. The world of experience, to the Vedānta, is, in the last resort, subject to sublation in the knowledge of the Atman, to which the objects of the world cannot correspond, and in which it loses all practical efficiency, and also proves to be

incoherent with the structure of the hidden and real nature of the universe. Metaphysically, and apart from what is revealed in temporal perception, all things exist in a system in which they are interrelated and mutually determined as elements ultimately contained in a supersensible completeness. Everything in this universal system implies and is implied by everything else, so that in essence everything is everywhere to be found. Consequently, it would mean that to know anything in the world perfectly one would have to know the whole world at one stroke, and intuit pure being in non-temporal immediacy, for the search of the ultimate reality of any object leads one to other objects, the nature and mode of whose existence determines it, so that the search can end only on reaching and realising indivisible being. Empirical judgments have only a pragmatic value, are relatively valid and sufficient for all practical purposes in one's day-to-day life. But such judgments are not ultimately valid, for all sense-knowledge has to be classed under appearances, since it proceeds from the reflection of the Atman in the Antahkarana and catches only aspects of reality in the forms of discrete objects in space and time. Everything in the world points beyond itself to a boundless existence, and this fact is demonstrated in the constant change that things undergo, and their tendency to overcome barriers and obstructions at every step. Everything embraces all other things, for everything is a mirror reflecting the whole universe. Judgments which presuppose the isolated existences of things cannot be ultimately true, for all things exist in and for the whole. The knowledge of the true essence of things is given not in

relational perception of externalised conditions or objects, but in the intuitional revelation of the Absolute.

### **Realistic Idealism**

Empirical knowledge, according to Swami Sivananda, is the result of the action of the Antahkarana-Vritti illuminated by consciousness. This consciousness is finally to be discovered only in the Atman, and nowhere else. Ordinarily speaking, empirical knowledge is a relational product caused by the rise of consciousness in the subject due to the reception of external stimuli in the form of sensations. The sensations are tremendously influenced by the subtle impressions or Samskaras embedded in the mind of the knower, and hence in perceptive knowledge there is an element of the force of the personal constitution of the subject playing an important part and determining the nature of the experience that is given in perception. But the actual material content of sensations is not the product of the internal Samskaras or the cognitive consciousness, but bears relation to objects existing externally. Whether or not the objects, on ultimate analysis, prove to be indeterminable appearances which cannot be related in any way to an extra-mental reality, it is admitted by the very nature of the constitution of the subject and the nature of this experience that there ought to be an extra-mental basis for the appearance of objects. The theory of perception, then, leads to an epistemological realism, while at the same time implying a metaphysical idealism positing the existence of an absolute consciousness behind both the object and the subject. While it is accepted that the subject

is in no way the cause of the existence of the object, and that the object is independent of the empirical existence of the subject—for the universe of perception reveals itself as an organic completeness containing within itself the subject and the object as elements partaking of the same level of reality—it is held that there is a higher reality of a spiritual nature, which comprehends and transcends the relativity of the subject and the object. The Pramatrīchaitanya is not the transcendent Atman but the Jiva-chaitanya functioning in the world and subject to the laws of the world in which it works. It has therefore, no power over the existence of the object of perception, for the existence of this latter is not in any way inferior to that of the subject in the degree of its reality. It may be said neither that the object solely determines the character of perception nor that the subject fully determines the nature of the object, but there is a mutual interaction of the two sides in bringing about relational knowledge. Perceptual knowledge is individualistic, relational and so a process or an act, but knowledge in its essence, as the Atman, is non-relational and identical with simple being (*Vide, Commentary on the Brahmasutras: Volume I, pp. 384-390*).

Knowledge has to be considered to be an organic whole of the material of sensations and the perceiving consciousness. There are cases where the passions, ambitions and griefs of the subject are transferred to the object of perception, and the object is perceived to be beautiful, good or ugly or otherwise, in accordance with the nature of the mental condition of the perceiver. The perception of such objects produces an experience which is

valid only to that private individual. Perception of this nature comes, in fact, under illusions and is not right knowledge. In right perception the object reveals to the subject a nature which is also in agreement with the perceptions of it by others. Anyway, there is a reciprocal determination of the knower and the known in perception. All objects appear to be real at the time of their being known, but prove to be indeterminable on a logical analysis of their nature, and reveal their unreal character when contradicted by a higher and more inclusive experience. The object and the subject are logically distinguishable but not really separable. They have an empirical duality, but a real unity. As long as we take the individual subject to be the real knower, we have to admit that objects are not determined by sensations but that sensations are referred to externally existing objects. But the identity of the subject and the object of knowledge is revealed on the recognition of the true subject which is the highest Atman in us (*Vide, Secret of Self-realisation: Jnana-Yoga*).

On ultimate analysis it is discovered that there is nothing either in the object or in the subject except mere name and form plus the universal consciousness on which the name and form appear. Even space, time, substantiality, extension, resistance and causation are but the schema of the universal knowing subject fastened on to a network of objectivity. On receiving sensations one must, truly speaking, not refer them to anything outside in space, but to the essential nature of the consciousness which is the real subject. If this is done, there will be an experience of the instantaneous illumination of the Atman as shining within

and without, as subject as well as object. The rationalistic and the empiricistic attitudes to perception are reconciled in the acceptance of the Atman as the fundamental reality. It is the Atman that masquerades as the seer and the seen within space-time, and exists as the true substance behind the forms taken by the seer and the seen.

### **Theories of Error**

An understanding of the characteristics of our judgments of truth and error forms an integral part of philosophical knowledge. This understanding is necessary for the discovery of the deeper implications of experience. Knowledge, ordinarily, presupposes a subject of knowledge and an object corresponding to it. The nature of this knowledge is dependent upon the mind and the cognitive organs of the subject, as well as upon the conditions in which the object is situated in relation to the subject. The knowledge of colour through eyes which are affected with jaundice may be incorrect, since there is every possibility of its being the perception of an apparently objective yellow colour, though what is really objective may be some other colour. In the same manner, a distant object may be mistaken for something different from what it is, though the organs of perception may be in a healthy condition, and this error may be caused by a peculiar relation obtaining between the percipient and the position of the object. Our perceptions of things greatly influence what we infer and decide, which means that our life is judged by us in accordance with the modes of our perception and the knowledge based on them. As every inference is based on



previous perception, erroneous perception will nullify the value of the inferences built upon it.

Two kinds of erroneous perception may be distinguished from each other: the mistaken identification of an object really experienced at a given moment with another object which is at the same time in contact with the sense-organ, and the erroneous attribution of an object of memory to another object which is in contact with the sense-organ. The experience of bitter molasses on account of the affection of the tongue by bile and the perception of a yellow object on account of the yellowness of the bile affecting the eyes are instances of the first kind of error in perception. Molasses is sweet, and this is what is really experienced by the tongue, but the bitterness of the bile so influences the gustatory sense that the sweetness of the molasses is seriously affected by it. Similarly, the yellow colour of the bile affecting the eyes becomes a screen through which an external object is perceived, so that the object itself appears to partake of the character of yellowness. Here two things are known at one and the same time, both of which are real experiences, but due to the one being superimposed on the other, there is erroneous perception. In the case of the perception of silver in nacre or the perception of beauty in the object of one's love, there is erroneous perception of a different kind, for here something which is not really existent in the object, becomes the content of one's consciousness. In the first instance of error, that which is superimposed and that on which it is superimposed are both directly perceived objects. But in the perception of silver in nacre, the error is

caused by the sense-organs working in association with a memory of the silver seen in the past and revived in the perception of glitter which is common both to nacre and silver. Both forms of error noted above, i.e. those in which only real objects are involved and those in which a real object and an object of memory are involved, are sensory in character, for these are erroneous perceptions through the sense-organs.

But there are also purely mental perceptions wherein the functions of the senses are not involved. Objects which are perceived in dream, and the beloved who is perceived near him by a lover who is overpowered by passion, while in fact she is far away from him, are instances of mental hallucinations in which the cognising mind projects its conditions outside into space and perceives them as real objects. In this form of error, memory is the one factor which brings about the perception. Erroneous perception, therefore, can be caused by the perception of similar objects, e.g. brightness common to silver and nacre, or length, softness, etc. common to snake and rope; characters common to quadrupeds, such as are perceived in a cow and a horse; by movement of objects like the firebrand or a boat in a river; by distance as in the case of the perception of the smallness of the moon; by lack of sufficient light; by defective sense-organs like the eye affected by cataract on account of which there is a splitting of light rays issuing from the eyes, causing the perception of two moons; by experience of passions like lust, anger, grief, etc.; by one's being accustomed to perceive the same object frequently; by a half-sleepy state of the mind; by too much brooding over

an object; by imbalance of bodily humours; and also by the result of actions of past birth. In mental erroneous perception, like dream-experience, the memory images are projected outside by being invested with spatiality and objectiveness. In sensory illusions like the perception of silver in nacre or beauty in an object of love, there is a superimposition of memory images and mental conditions on really existing external objects.

The different schools of philosophy have advanced different theories of error in accordance with their avowed theories of knowledge. These theories concerning the nature of erroneous perception are technically called *Khyatis*. There are six important Khyatis in Indian philosophy. They are: 1. Satkhyati, 2. Akhyati, 3. Anyathakhyati, 4. Atmakhyati, 5. Asatkhyati, and 6. Anirvachaniyakhyati.

The theory of Satkhyati is held by Ramanuja and his followers. According to this theory, there is no error in fact. What is experienced is real. Satkhyati, Akhyati and Anyathakhyati may be brought under the general head Satkhyati, which is in opposition to Asatkhyati. But the general theory of Satkhyati as advocated by Ramanuja's system holds the view that in wrong knowledge there is cognition of some kind of reality or existence. In essence, even Atmakhyati may come under Satkhyati, for it admits the reality of cognition within. The theory of Asatkhyati is advanced by the Madhyamikas or Sunyavadins who hold that in wrong knowledge there is cognition of unreality or non-existence. The Anirvachaniyakhyati is the view of the Advaitin, that objects experienced are indeterminable, and

that the object of erroneous cognition is neither real, nor unreal, nor real-unreal, i.e. it is Sadasadvilakshana. Atmakhyati is the theory of the Vijnanavadins, the Vaibhashikas and the Sautrantikas—having different theories of perception—that the internal concept appears as the external percept, in erroneous cognition. Akhyati is the theory of the Sankhya, Yoga and the Prabhakara school of Purva-Mimamsa, according to which there is, in error, non-distinction between a memory image and a percept. Anyathakhyati is the view of the Nyaya, Vaisesika and Kumarila Bhatta's school of Purva-Mimamsa, and this holds that the substratum and the percept of erroneous cognition are real independently.

### **Satkhyati**

**Statement:** According to Satkhyati, all objects exist independent of the knowledge which others have of them. The non-existent cannot be perceived. Truth is the correspondence between knowledge and an object which has independent existence. The erroneous cognition of silver in nacre is not really the cognition of something unreal, as such, for it refers to something which exists. The elements of silver that are contained in nacre are responsible for the perception of silver in nacre, though these elements require the aid of a peculiar constitution of the perceiving sense-organs. Though erroneous judgment may be due to defective sense-organs, the absolutely non-existent cannot be perceived at any time. As, by the process of quintuplication, every element contains parts of other elements, it is possible that anything can contain any other

thing. Even the perception of yellow colour in things by a person affected with jaundice is not the perception of some colour which is really not in objects, but of what all objects possess in some degree, though this cannot be perceived by all eyes. The eye which is affected with jaundice, being favourably conditioned, can see it. Hence the distinction which is ordinarily made between truth and error does not really exist. But in order that truth may be practically useful in life, it should correspond not merely to some existent thing, in some degree, but to the element which is preponderating over others in that object which is perceived. Hence only those elements which, being commonly predominant in things, are equally perceived by all others also, can alone be really useful in life. When something is perceived only by one individual, privately, and not by others, it becomes the so-called unreal or the illusory. But even the content of this private perception by an individual has existence, though it cannot be seen by others. What is called correction of error is not the negation of what is existent, but only the cessation of effort in regard to the non-predominant element in the object.

**Refutation:** In quintuplication, the gross physical elements are not quintuplicated; only the subtle rudimentary principles of these elements are quintuplicated. Else, one would perceive silver in a pillar of stone. The constituents of nacre and silver are not mixed up in one object. If silver is really contained in nacre, the silver part of the nacre should melt when the nacre is thrown into fire. A snake is not present in the rope as one of the constituents of the latter.

## Akhyati

**Statement:** The theory of Akhyati holds that the inability to discriminate (Aviveka) between cognitions of different kinds and between their corresponding objects is error. Error is not the perception of something existent, but the non-perception of difference between different cognitions of different characteristics and contents. The two cognitions are real, independently, without reference to each other. In the perception of silver in nacre, the perception of 'Idamta' or 'thisness' is true perception, but the vision of the silver is only a memory of what was previously perceived. The non-perception of the difference between the two real distincts is due to some defect in perception. Perception and memory, the object of perception and the object of memory, are different from one another. But this difference is not perceived in erroneous perception. Memory is mistaken for perception. As there is this inherent mistake in perception, it does not lead to successful activity corresponding to the perception. Correction of error is the subsequent consciousness of the distinction between what is perceived (e.g. nacre) and what is merely remembered (e.g. silver). But in correction there is no cancellation of either nacre or silver; only the distinction between them and that of perception from memory are recognised. In perception through a jaundiced eye the distinction between the yellowness of the bile and the real colour of the object perceived is not seen. Really speaking, there is no such thing as absolute error. The so-called error is only the absence of the recognition of the true relation between the two elements in knowledge. But

the contents of knowledge are never unreal or false. Truth may not be known fully, but there cannot be, strictly speaking, knowledge of untruth or falsehood.

**Refutation:** The Purvapakshin admits that the perception of an object implies the perception of the difference of that object from another object. There is the negation of cloth in a pot, and vice versa, and without this negation being implied in the perception of a cloth or a pot, neither of these can be perceived. And the perception of distinction is the same as that of reciprocal relationship among objects. Distinction is the essential nature of every object. Without the perception of distinction, there is no perception at all. Hence it is not true that the distinction between nacre and silver is not cognised, though the two objects are cognised in perception and memory, respectively. As knowledge is accepted to be self-luminous, the moment it is manifest it should reveal difference. And when any object is known, its distinction from other objects should also be known simultaneously. Thus, the possibility of the non-cognition of difference does not arise.

Further, it is not true that the non-discrimination between percept and memory obtains in all forms of experience. In dream when, really, all experience is only a memory, except that of the self which alone is known directly, a distinction between this direct experience and memory is made; else, there would not be perception of dream objects. If the object seen in dream as a memory-image is non-distinguished from direct experience, one would have the knowledge 'I am the object,' and not 'this is the object.' It cannot also be said that two memory-images

are non-distinguished in error, for, in that case, there would be no experience of error.

### **Anyathakhyati**

**Statement:** According to Anyathakhyati, error is not the non-distinction between a percept and a memory or between their contents. The silver that is seen in nacre is not a mere memory. A memory-image cannot be directly perceived. But it is true that the silver that is seen in nacre is not really where it is seen. If the silver seen in nacre were absolutely unreal, there would be no perception of silver at all. An absolutely non-existent entity cannot be perceived as existent. But it is also true that the silver in question is not actually present in the nacre. This is proved by the failure of this silver to conform to practical workability and utility. Error is the cognition of a composite situation brought about by a kind of subsistence of silverness in the 'thisness' (Idamta) in cognition.

The fact is that nacre, in erroneous perception, is not perceived as it is. It is not the character of nacre but the 'thisness' of nacre with a quality of glittering that is perceived in such error. A memory of silver arises in the mind of the perceiver when the character of glittering which is attributed to silver is perceived. Now, what is perceived wrongly is neither nacre fully nor silver really, but the 'thisness' of nacre with the quality of silverness attributed to the fact of glittering. So, what is known is not merely a memory of silver, but the silver existing somewhere else brought into relationship with the perceiving eye by the memory arisen in the mind. Really, it



is a relation that is there, but it gets identified with actual perception due to memory. Though the relation between the 'thisness' and the eye is ordinary, the relation between the silver and the eye is extraordinary, and not natural. But some kind of relation obtains between two things in erroneous cognition. Though nacre is not silver, it appears to the eye as silver, through the extraordinary relation mentioned above.

In erroneous cognition two factors are involved: One that is 'there' and the other that is 'not there,' observed by the eye through the natural and the non-natural relations of the contents with the eye. In the correction of error, what is negated is not silver itself, but the supposed relation between the 'thisness' and the silver. What is negated is not a non-existent silver, for the non-existent cannot be seen. The silver must exist somewhere. And it must be somewhere else, for its negation is experienced in the correction of error.

**Refutation:** In erroneous cognition silver does not appear as a distant object, but is identified with something which is existent before the eyes. The existence of silver somewhere else has no bearing on the silver that is perceived in nacre. The so-called actual perception of silver in erroneous judgment is only an appearance of silver, and for this a really existent silver is unnecessary. Moreover, when the error is corrected, one feels: 'This is not silver,' and not 'there is no relation between the thisness of this nacre and the distant silver.' What is cancelled in correction is the silver perceived there and not merely a relation of silver with 'thisness.' And a relation which is unreal cannot,

according to the Anyathakhyativadin himself, be negated; and if it is real, it cannot, again, be negated. And further, the admission of extraordinary perception makes inference useless, for the process of extraordinary perception can be applied to inference, and vice versa.

### **Atmakhyati**

**Statement:** According to this theory, the silver perceived in nacre is not silver really existing somewhere outside. This silver is real as an object of internal cognition, but unreal as an object of external perception. It is not absolutely non-existent, for it is perceived. It has subjective existence and objective non-existence. This silver is an object of the mind and not of the senses. It is ideal and not real, psychological and not physical; and error is the projecting outward, as a material object, of the internal mental concept which is non-material. In error, the mental is mistaken for the material. In the correction of error, it is not the silver that is negated, but only its apparent externality of being. In correct perception (i.e. of nacre after the removal of error), the silver is recognised as an internal concept. The Vaibhashikas and the Sautrantikas accept that there is an externally real basis, the 'this,' the former holding that this basis is directly perceived, and the latter that it is only inferred. But both these admit that the silver perceived in nacre is projected from within on the external substratum, whether this substratum is perceived or inferred. The Vijñanavadins hold that there is nothing externally real, and that the cognised object is only cognition externalised by error. They hold that there is

non-distinction, at the time of cognition, between cognition and the cognised, which proves that the cognised is cognition itself.

**Refutation:** That the cognised and cognition are non-distinct is not a fact. The cognition of the cognised and the existence of the cognised at the time of cognition naturally appear to be simultaneous; but simultaneity is not identity. The manifestation of light and the revelation of an object with its aid are simultaneous events; but light and the object are not identical with each other. The cognitive consciousness cannot be said to be the same as the cognised object. How can something appear outside when there is nothing outside? There cannot be an appearance without some reality underlying it. We can have changing cognitions of the same object, and also more than one object can be cognised by the same cognitive consciousness. This proves that objects outside are not mere internal cognitions. Objects exist prior to their perception; objects are in space outside, while the cognitive consciousness is within. There is thus a temporal and spatial distinction between cognition and its objects. Moreover, there would be no distinction between truth and error, if all objects were mental. Something independent of cognition has to be admitted if truth is to be distinguished from error. Without this independent existence, there cannot be common perception of things by all alike, and thus there would be no such thing as truth, other than private fancy. But common perception disproves the Vijñānavāda position of the ideality of external things.

## Asatkhyati

**Statement:** This theory holds that what is cognised in erroneous cognition is absolutely non-existent. If the silver perceived in nacre were real, it could not be sublated afterwards on correct perception. As silver seen in erroneous perception is not seen in correct perception, it is clear that the silver of the erroneous perception does not really exist. Due to the power of Avidya or ignorance, cognition manifests a non-existent silver. The impression of the previous perception of silver becomes responsible for the perception of an appearance of silver in erroneous judgment. As correction of error reveals the non-existence of silver in nacre, we have to conclude that Sunya or the non-existent is the object of erroneous cognition.

**Refutation:** Avidya cannot create the non-existent silver, for the non-existent cannot be created at any time. If the unreal does not even appear, it is not possible even to say that the unreal does not appear, as one cannot say: 'My mother is barren.' Further, cognition which is the substratum of Avidya cannot be caused by Avidya to manifest an unreal object. The cause cannot be directed or influenced by the effect. Hence, cognition possessing the power of Avidya cannot produce the non-existent silver in nacre. And, moreover, no kind of relation can be established between cognition and silver, for there can be no relation between the existent and the non-existent. Without a relation between the cognition and the object cognised, no cognition is possible. What is cognised in erroneous cognition is not the non-existent, and not also the truly existent, but only an appearance or

Pratibhasikasatta which is devoid of Vyavaharikasatta or practical reality and value. The illusion of Vyavaharikata in Pratibhasikata is cancelled in correction of error, but it is not true that even Pratibhasikata is absent in erroneous cognition. The Pratibhasikasatta appears as an external object, and not merely as a notion or an idea within. Objective reality is of two kinds: Vyavaharika and Pratibhasika. The latter is called the unreal in practical life. Mistaking this latter for the former is error. Error is corrected when the objective basis (Vyavaharikasatta) of the appearance (Pratibhasikasatta) is discovered in one's cognitive consciousness.

### **Anirvachaniyakhyati**

The Anirvachaniyakhyati, which is the theory of the Advaitin, is the logical conclusion arrived at through a criticism of the various other views on error. The silver seen in nacre is neither real, nor a memory, nor existent somewhere else, nor an internal idea, nor absolutely nonexistent like a human horn. This silver is not different from the real alone, not different from the unreal alone, and not different from both the real and the unreal alone. One cannot definitely describe the nature of the silver perceived in nacre. It is not real, for it is sublated. It is not unreal, for it is perceived. It is not both real and unreal, for this is self-contradictory. Hence the silver in nacre is Anirvachaniya, indeterminable. Objects which have Pratibhasikasatta have the characteristics of indeterminability mentioned above—they are Anirvachaniya. The indeterminability of appearances like this, which do not conform to the laws of

empirical action, is of one kind, and can be said to constitute empirical error; and the indeterminability of the objects of correct perception in waking life is of a different kind altogether, and can be said to constitute transcendental error. This latter can be understood only through reason, scripture and direct realisation. The indeterminability of the nature of the world of waking life is explained by the admission in life of a distinction between empirical reality (Vyavaharikasatta) and absolute Reality (Paramarthikasatta). With reference to Vyavaharikasatta, Pratibhasikasatta is Anirvachaniya; and with reference to Paramarthikasatta, Vyavaharikasatta is Anirvachaniya. It is quite obvious that anything which cannot be called either real or unreal or real-unreal must be called indeterminable.

The Anirvachaniya character of silver perceived in nacre can be established by the Arthapatti mode of proof (postulation). The silver in question, as it has been shown above, is not real. It is not unreal. And it is not also real-unreal. So it ought to be indeterminable. This is the process of Arthapatti. What other relation than Anirvachaniyatva can obtain between reality and appearance? Yet, this Anirvachaniyasatta has an objective basis. In the case of empirical erroneous cognition, e.g. the cognition of silver in nacre, this basis is nacre. In transcendental erroneous cognition, i.e. the cognition of the universe in Brahman, the basis is Brahman. The object in empirical error is cognised due to a psychological error; and the basis for this cognised object is a physical object which is empirically real. The object in transcendental error is cognised due to a

metaphysical error; and the basis for this cognised object is Brahman which is absolutely real.

The unreality of silver in nacre is different from the unreality of such things as a man's horn. The latter cannot be perceived, for it is never manifest in experience, while the former is perceived, and it has some sort of objective existence. It has Pratibhasikasatta which a man's horn does not have. But this Pratibhasikasatta has no Vyavaharikasatta, and so it is negated in correct perception, i.e. in the perception of nacre as such. Silver in nacre is an Anirvachaniya-vastu. Even the nacre as such does not have Paramarthikasatta, and so it, too, gets negated in the knowledge of Brahman. Nacre as such, also, is an Anirvachaniya-vastu. The Anirvachaniya is not the absolutely non-existent, but the indefinable empirical and the apparent. The empirical belongs to Isvarasrishti and is the product of Maya, while the apparent belongs to Jivasrishti and is produced by Avidya.

The theories of Drishtisrishti (creation on perceiving) and Srishtidrishti (perception on creation) pertain to the Pratibhasika and Vyavaharika objects, in two different levels of perception. The silver perceived in nacre is Drishtisrishta (created on perception), for it exists only so long as it is seen, and it is created by perception caused by individual Avidya. But the nacre as such exists whether it is perceived by an individual or not. Hence it is independent of Drishtisrishti. As its perception is posterior to its existence, it is a case of Srishtidrishti. But this nacre is the product of the Drishti or perception of Isvara through the cosmic Maya. And nacre cannot exist when Isvaradrishti is

withdrawn. It exists only so long as it is visualised by Isvara. Thus the Vyavaharikasatta is Drishtisrishta from the standpoint of Isvara, though it is the basis of Srishtidrishti from the standpoint of the Jiva. The Pratibhasikasatta is purely Drishtisrishta even from the point of view of the Jiva. When nacre is seen, the silver in it vanishes. When Brahman is realised, the universe in it is sublated. When Reality is known, the appearances superimposed on it disappear.

The fact that in the negation of error the silver perceived in nacre is found to be non-existent does not prove that the silver, at the time of its being perceived, was non-existent. As it has been already observed, the non-existent cannot manifest itself before the perceptive consciousness. The perceptions of dream are found to be non-existent during the waking state; but this does not prove that dream objects are absolutely non-existent, for they were experienced during dream. The Vedanta, therefore, makes a distinction between Pratibhasikasatta and Vyavaharikasatta. Silver in nacre and dream objects belong to the former category; nacre and all other objects of the universe belong to the latter.

Thus it is established that the silver appearing in nacre is Anirvachaniya. Otherwise, the perception and sublation of one and the same thing cannot be explained. In the same way, it is to be understood that the universe superimposed on Brahman is Anirvachaniya. Maya and Avidya are both Anirvachaniya; and what they manifest, also, should be regarded as Anirvachaniya (*Essence of Vedanta: pp. 213-229*).



## **The Nature of Intuition**

Intuition is the direct apprehending act of consciousness. It is that power in the higher reaches of the mind which perceives the truth of things immediately, independent of sensation, reasoning, induction and deduction. Intuition may be the non-mediate apprehension by a subject of its own essence, of the reality of its conscious states, of other minds, of other objects in the world, or of abstract universals. Intuition is supersensory. It transcends sense, intellect and reason and constitutes the full blossoming of these lower faculties into perfection. Intuition is different from inspiration. The former is knowledge by entering into the very existence of the object that is known, however remote it may be, while the latter is a mental experience caused by the transmission of the qualities of a higher consciousness to the mind.

“Intuition is an active inner awareness of the immortal and blissful Self within. It is the eye of wisdom through which the sage senses in everything the unseen presence. It is the Divya-chakshus, Prajna-chakshus or the Jnana-chakshus through which the Yogi or the sage experiences the supreme vision of the all-pervading Atman or Brahman” (*Precepts for Practice*, p. 138). “Intuition, intuitive discernment, in fact, is the only touchstone of philosophy. The method of intuition is the only one of discerning the truth ultimately. Intuition is the method. Realisation or the Self is the goal. Without developing intuition the intellectual man remains imperfect and blind to the truth behind appearance” (*Ibid.* p. 141). Intuition is the ultimate source of all proofs of knowledge. Other ways

of knowing, like sense-perception, inference and verbal testimony give us only an indirect knowledge. The highest revelation comes to the self by itself alone, independent of external instruments and other accessories needed in empirical knowledge. The highest truth can be given only in intuition. The deepest secrets of Nature are not matters of sensory or intellectual perception. Truths which are related to the innermost being of the universe can be known only in intuition in which there is no process of knowledge, but the being of the object known becomes the existence-content of consciousness. The immediacy of intuitive perception is different from the apparent non-mediacy of sense-perception. Knowledge in the waking and the dreaming states is knowledge by process, requiring a relation between the knower and the known. But in intuition the object of knowledge does not stand outside as something alien to it. It gets assimilated into the constitution of knowledge itself. By intuition we are assured of the inner meaning and significance of things, of a supernatural import in the structure of the universe. The highest form of intuition is the recognition of the Self by itself in all things. It is, in the words of Plato, a conversation of the soul with itself. The object of knowledge in intuition does not present itself as a not-self which requires to be known by any process of perceptive knowledge, but is in sympathy with the permanent nature of knowledge itself. Certain experiences are often called intuition, though they are rather inspirations than true intuition. The creative power of the unconscious mind is such that sometimes the rational activity of the mind goes on below the subliminal

level. It can continue far below the threshold of consciousness, in sleep and dream, very often. The mind yields ready forms of ratiocination and solutions. This activity of the higher mind is an unconscious functioning of the expression of the soul at the background of every mental function. The workings of the mind do not permit conscious willing except in the limited form in which they manifest, and they brook no encroachment by reason. But intuition as developed in the spiritual field widens the scope of reason and makes conscious willing possible in the highest degree, and in every direction (*Vide, Jnana-Yoga: pp. 54-62*). In the lower forms of intuition a supersensory process of perception may make a superficial distinction between the knower and the known. But this distinction is without much difference, for this knowledge-distinction is really something like the difference observed between the different parts or stages of a current of flowing water. There is a flow of knowledge and a practical distinction between the knower and the known, but the fact of the assimilation of the existence of the object into knowledge abolishes in intuition all real distinction, in kind or characteristic. In the higher forms of intuition even this flow of knowledge towards an object ceases, for here the object is known in its true nature, as ultimately one with the consciousness. This is what happens in the intuition of the Absolute.

### **Intellect and Intuition**

In intellectual analysis truth is distorted and falsified to some extent, for here existence gets separated into the subject and the object. Without duality there is no

intellectual function, and with duality there is no knowledge of reality. The intellect breaks up the unity of being into a system of isolated terms and relations. The predicate is differentiated from the subject and then dovetailed into the subject itself by being made an adjective of the latter. The unitary existence is thus divided into a primary and a secondary aspect, which occasions false perception. Whatever be the extent of the predicate of a logical proposition, it cannot be more than empirical knowledge, for it is knowledge by division and not union of the subject and the object. An aggregate of an infinite number of particulars cannot give us the Absolute. Sense, feeling, thought and understanding, together with volition, are below the level of intuition. In all physical processes knowledge takes the form of an artificial relation of the predicate to the subject. In intuition there is no adjectival predicate required to qualify the subject, for it is knowledge of existence in essence. Logical knowledge takes one away from insight into the truth of things; it gives us a superficial glimpse of the manner in which objects appear to us in the world. Man's powers of knowledge are not adapted to comprehend reality. "His consciousness has adapted itself to understanding the world in terms of time and space. If it were freed from keeping busy with the perception of the outer world and focussed upon a world of 'noumenon,' it would transcend time and space and adapt itself to perceiving the noumenon in a special way" (*Precepts for Practice*, p. 139). It is intuition alone that is capable of bringing the various particulars together to form a

harmonious whole and enable the self to enter the portals of Reality.

Intellect and intuition are not really opposed to each other. Intellect is lifted up and universalised in the purified state of intuition. Intuition does not negative intellectual perception but transfigures it in a higher perception. The purpose of the intellect is fulfilled in the illumination of intuition. While intellect gives us a shadow, intuition takes us to the substance. Intellect functions on the belief in the partiteness of things, but intuition enters directly into the whole object, right up to the essence. What intellect achieves is understanding, while that which is gained in intuition is practical wisdom. The intellect functions on the wrong basis of the assumption that the results achieved by the process of the distinction of the knower and the known are fully trustworthy. Without belief in this difference there is no logic, and with this difference there is no truth. The complete synthesis of knowledge would be a union of principles where the intellect is overcome, where reason rises above itself and where differences are obliterated. This achievement is not possible as long as the seeker rests contented in the human consciousness. The moral urge within him to reach perfection points to the existence of a knowledge which is unlimited in every way. There can be a fulfilment of this aspiration only in Aparoksha-Anubhava (non-mediate experience).

In matters transcendental, such as the existence of God, the unity of the world and the immortality of the soul, the pronouncements of the intellect can never be free from the defects of wrong notion and doubt. Reason in its search

after truth has always to be guided by the deliverances of intuition. Unaided reason often moves along the edge of a dangerous precipice through which it may easily fall into an error which would prove its own ruin. Intuition does not contradict the pure reason, and since reason has nothing better to say, it has to accept the trustworthy character of what is heard from those who have a direct insight into truth. Logic may scrutinise, reason may verify the validity of the facts of intuition, but as they are found to be agreeable to logic as well as reason, and as also they ratify the moral urge within man, they have to be taken as a guiding torch in one's quest after truth. Reason always bases itself on sense-perception. The test of truth is not verifiability by sense, but non-contradiction and agreement with the revelations of the deepest source of knowledge.

Discursive reason concerns itself only with objects that remain outside the self and are externally related to knowledge. Intuition in its highest reaches is not knowledge *of* being but knowledge *as* being. Self-knowledge is the summit of intuitive perception, and it is inseparable from self-existence. It is the only true and direct knowledge. All else is relational, mediate, inferential and presupposes the characteristics of knowledge as attained in intuition. It is the light of the Self that flashes forth and overshadows all knowledge which man is acquainted with in the world. The possibility of an intuitive knowledge is demonstrated in the metaphysical acceptance of the absoluteness of the Self. There is, ultimately, only one 'I,' the universal Self asserting itself everywhere in creation. This Self is at the back of all thought-processes, all rational knowledge, all psychical

operations. Strictly speaking, we should not equate Self-realisation with intuition in the sense of any kind of perception, even if it be the highest perception, for Self-experience is being itself. Swami Sivananda remarks: "Knowledge through the functioning of the causal body (Karana-Sarira) is intuition." "Atma-Jnana (knowledge of the Self) is above intuition. It transcends the Karana-Sarira. It is the highest form of knowledge. It is the only reality" (*Mind and Its Mysteries*: p. 83).

Intuition gives an entire and concrete insight into reality, while intellect gives partial knowledge abstracted from reality. Intuition reveals the cosmic interrelatedness of things, while intellect gives a static picture of isolated objects. Intuition gives a synthetic view of reality, while intellect provides us with analytic concepts of falsely bifurcated entities. The universe is presented as a collection of fragments due to the discursive and dividing activity of the intellect. An intuitive knowledge of an object bestows supreme power on one over that object. The intuition of Reality is, verily, omniscience, and omniscience is at once omnipotence. This is to attain to existence, knowledge, power and freedom in their completeness. Knowledge relating to truth is the only normal knowledge in a person, error being an exception to the rule. The essence of man is truth, and not error. Error is an aberration from one's own being. Wrong is action done against oneself. The law of perfection, in general, is in relation to and in consonance with the inner perfection of the individual. The individual and the universe are not two realities but one in their substratum. To get at the inner essence of thought is, in

fact, to possess in it a true characterisation of reality. Truth is not a concept but true existence—universal, general and necessary.

“Inspiration, revelation, insight, intuition, ecstasy, divine sight and supreme bliss are the seven planes of knowledge. The vast majority of people will always want something concrete to hold on to, something around which, as it were, to place their ideas, something which will be the centre of all thought-forms in their minds. This is the very nature of the mind” (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 82*). “There are four sources of knowledge, viz. instinct, reason, intuition and super-intuition or Brahma-Jnana. Instinct is found in animals, birds, etc. In birds (for example) the ego does not interfere with the free divine flow and divine play. Hence the work done by them through their instincts is more perfect than that done by human beings. Have you not noticed the excellent work done by birds in their building of wonderful nests? Reason is higher than instinct, and is found only in human beings. It collects facts, generalises, reasons out from cause to effect, from effect to cause, from premises to conclusions, from propositions to proofs. It concludes, decides and comes to judgment. It takes one safely to the door of intuition and leaves him there. In intuition there is no reasoning. There is direct perception of truth. We know things by a flash. Intuition transcends reason, but does not contradict it” (*Ibid. p. 83*). Intuition is the voice of the inner man, the faculty by which the individual tries to apprehend itself in eternity. Empirical knowledge is an image cast in the mind by the imperishable wisdom that shines in



intuition. Reason itself discovers, in the end, a realm lying beyond its operational field. The knowledge of the limitations of reason is an acceptance of there being a knowledge transcending reason. Knowledge of a boundary implies the knowledge of what extends outside the boundary. The aspiration for infinite knowledge, the urge for perfection, points to an experience which speaks, in the language of silence, of its supremacy over all things known to man. Intuition is, as it were, the antenna by which the Absolute feels its own self in the objects of the universe. Intuition heralds the coming of the experience of Brahman. It establishes in the universe a divine family, and fulfils the promise of a universal brotherhood of all created beings. A feeling of kinship with all things is possible only on the foundation of the perception of oneness. Perfect knowledge has the characteristic mark of uniformity, for it depends on self-accomplished and truly existing objects. Whatever is permanently of one and the same nature and endures without undergoing change in the history of time is acknowledged to be true. The knowledge of truth is perfected knowledge. In it a mutual conflict of opinions is not possible, for it is rooted in what is equally true to all persons and things, everywhere and at all times. Intuition is the golden key to blessedness.

## **CHAPTER VI: THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSE**

### **The World of Science**

The term universe signifies the totality of space, time and matter. Modern physical science has discovered that matter has no independent existence but can be reduced to the ultimate constitution of the space-time manifold. Ordinarily, space is conceived as extendedness with three dimensions, and time as a consciousness of the succession of events in space. Thus, common perception makes an empirical distinction between space and time. But scientists like Minkowski, Einstein and Eddington have tried to demonstrate and prove that every event in the universe has a four-dimensional character. What we perceive is not space and time but a space-time continuum. Matter itself is found to owe its origin to a particular feature discoverable in the space-time manifold. A kink or twist or curvature in space-time is said to be responsible for the appearance of what is commonly called matter. The nature of this curvature is dependent upon the quality and the amount of matter that it contains. The greater the matter, the greater is the curvature. And this curvature it is that goes by the name of gravitational force.

Philosophers like Kant denied any externality to space and viewed it as a necessary mode of objective perception, a special condition of the sensibility. Space, however, is not a creation of any individual mind, for all perceptions are contained in it, though it is possible for us to believe that space may be a mode of perception by a cosmic mind. In these days, there is a tendency to reduce perceptual space to certain kinds of relationship between bodies, to position,

distance and direction. Even these relations are external, objective and real to all perceiving minds and are not the creations of any particular mind. Space, thus, becomes a cosmic factor necessary for the perception of things by all minds.

Time appears as an element very necessary in the understanding of any event completely. It is not enough if we merely understand the three dimensions—right and left, up and down, far and near—related to an object or event. We also require to know, in addition to these factors, a fourth dimension—succession in terms of *before* and *after*. Such temporal succession in space is called time, and due to the peculiar manner of the reaction of our minds to events that occur in space in what we call succession, we are made to create a distinction between past, present and future. The succession is really continuous, and no genuine demarcation can be made in it. But, on account of the play of our minds in the form of sense-perception, memory and imagination, such a threefold distinction is made in the passage of time. In fact, the *present* is only a concept. It does not exist as distinguished from the past and the future. In actual practice the present turns out to be the subtle concept of an infinitesimal part of the succession of events, which directly appears as a content of sense-experience. The past has an infinite history and the future has infinite possibilities. The present fades away either to eternity or to nothingness.

Space, time and matter, however, have a common origin which contains all these in a unified and homogeneous form in what is designated today as the

space-time continuum. The Newtonian conception of absolute space and absolute time with localised bodies in them has been abandoned, and the concept of gravitation itself has undergone a new orientation. Matter is fast losing its solidity and evaporating into an indescribable energy which is now considered to be the matrix of the universe. According to Einstein and his followers, the ultimate physical reality of the universe is space-time. The inequalities, the twists, the curved nature of space-time constitute the visible matter. This means that matter can be reduced to energy and the space-time manifold. Newton's theory that material bodies are drawn out of the straight line which would be their natural course of motion, in the direction of other material bodies by a peculiar force called gravitation, has been now supplanted by the discovery that no such force does exist, that bodies are not pulled in that way, but that what is called the gravitational force is a peculiar curvature of space around bodies of matter. The path of any material body in the region of this curvature is determined only by this curvature, and not by any other force called gravitation.

The stable universe of Newton has disappeared into a cosmos of relativity with space-time as its ultimate basis, constructed out of lines of force and intervals of events. There are no objects, only events; no points of space, only waves of energy. The visible universe is, therefore, not the real one. In the hands of the modern physicist the real universe becomes a supersensible object. We are given, instead of a hard, tangible and visible universe with the qualities conveyed to us by our senses, a universe of

mathematical point-events, symbols, which in the end clamour for being reduced to nothing but thought. To James Jeans, the universe is a construction of a cosmic mathematical mind, which may be called God; and to Arthur Eddington, the universe is of the stuff of a cosmic mind or consciousness. An enquiry into the ultimate reality of the physical universe has ended practically in a negation of it by the most advanced scientists of today, and in a return to mind and consciousness as its reality. Physics has landed itself in metaphysics, and the scientist has become a philosopher. Matter is slowly disclosing its essential psychical and spiritual being.

### **Inadequacy of the Mechanistic Conception of Life**

Mechanism is the theory that all existence, organic or inorganic, can be explained by matter, motion and force, and that no other thing is necessary for an understanding of life. Physics and chemistry are held to be competent to explain the processes of the universe in its totality. Every event is reduced by this theory to the movements of particles of matter in space. Higher forms of life are said to differ from the lower ones only in the complexity of their structure. Physical laws and chemical elements constitute the ultimate reality of the universe. Individuals differ from one another, not in their essential constitution, but in the manner in which they manifest themselves in life. The universe is supposed to work like a machine by means of physico-chemical laws. Even living organisms are not outside the laws of physics and chemistry. Evolution is purely mechanical; nothing new is ever created.

This mechanistic scheme of life is unable to explain the purpose that is seen in Nature. There is creativity and freedom manifest in organic evolution. The continuous adjustment of internal to external conditions is not done in a mechanical way, but with a definite purpose in view. There is new creation at every step, which is observed to be directed by a conscious purpose which is entirely different from blind mechanical impulse or push. Evolution is the progressive adaptation of life to its environments, a movement towards greater freedom, an assertion of the presence of a higher Intelligence which seeks to overcome the obstruction of matter in greater and greater degrees. There is a creative synthesis involved not only in the process of organic evolution but even in the organisation of electrons and protons into atoms, atoms into molecules, molecules into cells, cells into living organisms. In all this process there is noticed a synthesising tendency which cannot be attributed to the mechanical structure of physical bodies. A movement deliberately directed to an end that is yet to be realised cannot be said to be blind. It is not difficult to see that being manifest an inherent tendency to reach a goal common to all of them, which naturally makes one believe that there is a universal force at work everywhere, actuating all beings towards the attainment of their essential existence.

The view that there is new creation at every step should not be taken to be identical with the theory of the emergent evolutionists of the West. It is held, for example, that oxygen and hydrogen are the causes of water; but as these causes do not have the characteristics of their effect even in

the least, the emergent evolutionists think that there is an entirely new property manifested in the effect, which was not present in the cause. While denying the claims of mechanism, they are anxious to uphold the untenable theory that something can come out of nothing. In other words, it means that there can be an effect without a cause, for the special features appearing in water are said not to exist in its causes, viz. oxygen and hydrogen. This theory is obviously not acceptable on the very face of it, for we never see something coming out of nothing. That oxygen and hydrogen taken separately give no hint of the property of water shows, not that water has properties quite independent of those of oxygen and hydrogen, but that our observations of the essential constituent properties of the causes of water are today imperfect and very inadequate for the task. Complex organisms do not manifest entirely new characteristics, but make manifest those features that were already present in the cause, though imperceptible to and unrecognisable by even the acutest scientific examination. All hidden elements need not necessarily reveal themselves to analysis by means available at present to human beings. The new qualities that appear in effects are the results of the manifestation of a greater amount of reality, and this reality will be found to be commonly present in all things, though unevenly revealed in them. Evolution is not creation but an unfoldment of potential being. In most cases this potentiality is invisible and even unimaginable. Inorganic matter cannot express thought, emotion or understanding, and the reason for the appearance of the latter in higher organisms is to be ascribed not to physical laws but to the

nature of a reality which is endowed with such properties. If, on the other hand, there is an entirely new creation at every stage of evolution, there would be no possibility of a cosmic consciousness, an instantaneous knowledge of the past, present and future, which many sages claim to have in profound meditation. God is said to be omniscient; but even He cannot be so if there is an eternal and absolutely new creation every time. There cannot even be any such thing as eternity, if only the theory of emergent evolution is to be admitted as it is presented today. Only the acceptance of the view that evolution is an unfoldment of latent existence can explain satisfactorily experience as given in the world.

Living organisms exhibit a peculiar aptitude and capacity to grow, select, adjust, feel, preserve and reproduce, which cannot be seen to be present in inorganic bodies. Freedom and choice are the special prerogatives of living organisms, which matter does not have. Highly developed organisms struggle to overcome the encumbrances of unsuitable environment and finally succeed in their attempt. They use intelligence, tactics and methods which we cannot see functioning or operating in inorganic matter. The principle that directs the process of change, transformation and evolution is held by many to be a mind endowed with a consciousness of a specific destiny. A. N. Whitehead gives voice to the tendency of the present day to go beyond the mechanistic theory to the theory of organisms. He says that science is now becoming the study of organisms and that biology is the study of the larger organisms, whereas physics is the study of the smaller



organisms. Right from electrons and protons up to the highest kind of living bodies, there is to be observed a process of organisation into more complex structures. All this complicated process is ultimately under the guidance and direction of a reality that is immanent in all things—the principle of consciousness. Whether we agree with him or not in regard to all his propositions, there is no doubt that Bergson made an epoch-making advance in the attempt to break down the old belief in the ultimate competency of mechanistic laws to explain the phenomena of life. The conception of a driving force in evolution has a long history of its own. Huxley and Loeb propounded a mechanistic theory of life. Aristotle in ancient days, and Driesch in recent times, posited a vital force or some non-material principle. Bergson brought forth his *elan vital* and Lloyd Morgan and Samuel Alexander a *nisus*, for evolution. Hobhouse is inclined to think that there is a mind at the back of evolution operating as its propelling force. Eddington comes near the Vedanta when he admits a universal mind as the highest principle reigning behind all forms of life and existence. He says that the proud knowledge which the theory of relativity has given to the scientist today is after all, in regard to the nature of things, an empty shell—a form of symbols. “It is knowledge of structural form, and not knowledge of content. All through the physical world runs that unknown content, which must surely be the stuff of our consciousness. Here is a hint of aspects deep within the world of physics, and yet unattainable by the methods of physics. And, moreover, we have found that where science has progressed the farthest,

the mind has but regained from Nature that which the mind has put into Nature” (*Space, Time and Gravitation: p. 200*). The ingressive evolution of Whitehead throws much light on the possible truth of the fact of evolution. There is not any particular cause preceding any particular effect in the succession of events in time, but there is a universal interaction of forces, wherein each element is equally a cause and an effect when viewed with a cosmic vision of things. When the intellect functions within the framework of space-time, it is forced to look at the position of the cause as antecedence in time; but the whole question of time is finally solved in that consciousness which envisages the entire scheme of the universe in an eternal *now* and an infinite *here*.

### **Space, Time and Causation**

Space is the condition of externality, time the process of continuance of being. We know the world as contained in space, as existing in time. There is no world without space and time, and no idea of our living as human beings can ever arise except in terms of space and time. The two are fundamental for all experience, and life is unimaginable without the concepts of extension and period. It would appear from the nature of things that a knowledge of space and time would necessarily provide an insight into the nature of the world as a whole. The importance of this proposition becomes evident when we envisage the utter impossibility of the very concept of being, as far as we are concerned, except on the presupposition of the idea of space and time. Even thought becomes abortive when it is

forced to operate without the postulation of these limiting conditions prior to the attempt at thinking, or a least simultaneously with it. The world is often identified with the time-process and is indistinguishable from the notion of mass and dimension. Perhaps the world is what we understand by space and can be explained when the meaning of time is correctly understood. But what are space and time?

The Yogavasishtha, which abounds in an extensive treatment of the nature of the world in terms of space and time, propounds the amazing doctrine that space and time are not realities in themselves but appearances relative to experience. It teaches that space and time are ultimately constructions of thought and are dependent on thought. One cannot conceive of space and time when the functions of the mind are inhibited, or where no consciousness seems to operate. It is possible for different persons existing in different orders of reality to experience the same world as being possessed of different space-time significance. The reality of space and time, and the stability, order and meaning of the things of the world change, according to the Yogavasishtha, in different space-time realms. There can be no experience of space without the individualisation of consciousness. Space is a mode of perception by the individualised observer. Where individuality is not, space also is not. The perception of space is relative to the activity of the mind. Under different conditions, different orders of space can be perceived by the same mind. Even a small area of space can appear to the mind, under certain circumstances, as a vast extension, or a kingdom itself. The

mind in the state of dream, for example, experiences a universe with its own space and time. The dream world has all the characters and structural qualities of the waking world, and yet the two realms are different from each other. We also know that, even in this world, the mind can perceive a thing as what it is not. Two-dimensional pictures can be made to rouse the idea of a three-dimensional region of great immensity. The mind can project forth space in accordance with the condition in which it is. The idea of time, again, is dependent on the idea of space. In fact, the concepts of space and time rise simultaneously, and as spatial characters are relative to states of mind, so are time characters. A moment of time can appear to the mind as a long universal cycle, and the latter, again, can appear to it as a moment under certain given conditions. Whatever is the nature of the objective condition to which consciousness is related, that alone appears to it as reality. When consciousness is switched on to the idea of a moment, even an age can be passed as a moment, while, when it is identified with the idea of a long period of time, even a moment can be experienced as such. The nature of the experience of space and time depends upon the manner in which the consciousness happens to be objectively modalised. Persons who are in a depressed state of mind or who are in deep sorrow are apt to feel that a moment of time is like a year, while those who revel in happiness would feel the contrary. Space and time are ultimately conditions of consciousness and are not independent of it. In the dreaming state experiences ranging over thousands of years can be undergone in a moment's time, while, at the

same time, the mind in this state can also project a moment's experience into a history of several years. In the state of intense spiritual contemplation and Samadhi, space and time are transcended, and only pure consciousness reveals itself. In this consciousness the entire universal cycle is said to appear and disappear within the millionth part of a moment. Space is the way in which the mind knows things as having extension, and time is the feeling of the succession of internal states reacting to those of events outside.

The relativity of space and time, the ultimate ideal character of the world and the presence of worlds within worlds are picturesquely illustrated in the following remarkable story narrated in the Yogavasishtha:

There was a king called Padma who ruled over this earth. He had a queen, by name Lila. Due to her intense devotion to her lord, Lila wished that her husband should be exempted from death. With this in view she once invited the wise men of the city and questioned them as regards the possibility of freeing her husband from mortality. The wise men's reply was that no one in the world can ever be free from the clutches of death, for all that is born is bound to die. Disappointed at this, Lila began to propitiate the goddess Sarasvati. The goddess, being pleased, asked Lila what she wanted from her as a boon. Lila said in reply that, if her husband was to quit his body before her own demise, his soul might remain within her own room even after its departure, and not go outside anywhere. The goddess granted the boon and, adding that she would be present before Lila any time she thought of her, disappeared from

sight. In course of time, the death of Padma occurred, and Lila was sunk in sorrow. A voice from an invisible source proclaimed to Lila that there was no need to grieve over her husband's death, that his soul was inside her own room, and that his body should be preserved well until the time when his soul would vivify it again. Lila felt happy, meditated on the goddess Sarasvati, and instantly Sarasvati appeared before her. Lila questioned the goddess as to where her husband was living at that time. The goddess answered that the soul of Padma was within the room, but in a different world of space and time, which was subtler than this present world in which Lila was living. The goddess explained to Lila the way in which worlds exist within worlds, interpenetrating but without affecting one another. The one is absent to the other, though the one may exist within the other. But one who wishes to have a knowledge of the other worlds may, by extraordinary powers, obtain it. Hearing this, Lila cherished a desire to see personally the world in which her husband was living after his death. The goddess provided Lila with the necessary psychic equipment with which to enter the subtler realm and perceive the objects and events there as its denizen.

The goddess Sarasvati and Lila, by supernatural powers, entered the world of Padma, which he had gained as a result of his previous Karmas. Sarasvati and Lila, when they entered the new world, found that the king was sixteen years old and was ruling over a vast kingdom of his own, though Padma had died only a few hours before their arrival in this new kingdom. Lila was wonderstruck to have this marvellous experience, for she could not understand

how one could be sixteen years old within the period of a few hours and how a vast kingdom could exist within the limited space in a room. Sarasvati tried to dispel the doubts of Lila by explaining to her that worlds can exist even in an atom, that space and time are not limited to any single order of perception, that there are different spaces and times and that there are different worlds of different kinds, each governed by the special laws of its own space and time. The events that take place in a moment in a particular world may occur in a long universal cycle in some other world. In dream, one may experience the vicissitudes of a whole life in a moment. The same rule applies to other worlds also. Lila was in a state of consternation when she heard such startling things, but Sarasvati increased her dismay by telling her that she and her husband Padma were actually a Brahmin couple reborn after the latter's death which occurred only eight days before at some other place. And during this week Padma had ruled over his kingdom for fifty years and died. Sarasvati added that there was a Brahmin called Vasishtha living with his wife Arundhati. One day, the Brahmin happened to witness the procession of a king and developed a desire in his mind to enjoy the pleasures of a king. It so happened that the Brahmin died the same day, leaving the desire unfulfilled. The Brahmin's wife had received a boon that the soul of her husband, in case he died before her, should not go outside her house, and that she should live with her husband forever. Stricken with grief, Arundhati entered the funeral pyre of her husband and burnt herself. Sarasvati said that all this happened only eight days ago, and that Vasishtha and

Arundhati were reborn as Padma and Lila. The kingdom of Padma and Lila was then declared to be within the house of Vasishtha and Arundhati, and the new kingdom of Padma after his death to be within the room of Lila. What could be more terrifying to Lila than this? Sarasvati, in order to verify the facts in the presence of Lila, took her to the realm in which Vasishtha and Arundhati lived, where they saw the sons of the Brahmin couple wailing over the deaths of their parents. Lila actually saw the house of the Brahmin family and was informed by those then present that the death of the pious couple took place only a week ago. Lila developed immediately a desire to know all her previous births, and by the grace of Sarasvati she obtained this knowledge of her entire past history beginning from creation itself.

Sarasvati and Lila then returned to the kingdom of Viduratha, which was the name of Padma as king after his rebirth. To the surprise of Lila, Viduratha was found to be seventy years old then. He had married a queen, by name Lila. Due to his intense desire to live with his consort, Padma, in his present birth, too, obtained a queen of the same name, with the same qualities. Sarasvati and Lila called Viduratha in private and reminded him of his previous life as Padma. The king, due to his knowledge of his past birth, wished to become Padma again, and his present queen, who may be called Lila II, also wished to follow Viduratha in his future life as well, and asked for a boon to that effect from Sarasvati. After a time, the kingdom of Viduratha was invaded by enemies and there was a fierce battle fought between the contending armies.



In the battle, Viduratha was killed, and his soul which had not gone out of the room of Lila I, entered the corpse of Padma, and there Padma rose up again as the ruler of his previous kingdom. He began to have the consciousness of the new realm and found also the two Lilas standing before him as his queens, whom he had obtained as a result of the intensity of his desires. Padma then lived happily as a king with the two Lilas as his queens. The life of Viduratha, extending over seventy years, was lived in a single day after the death of Padma.

This story is intended to illustrate the fact that spaces and times are many and are related to their experiencer. All our experiences are the results of our previous desire-impressions. One's birth, death and the environment in which one lives are all the direct consequences of the patterns of one's desires. There is no such thing as a static and unconditioned world which can be valid for all people and for all times. The reactions to one's previous actions—mental, verbal or physical—materialise themselves as conditions of objective experience for the agent of those actions. Each one's world is made up of his own desires, though the material of that world may be drawn from any objective realm which may be equally real to many others who, too, happen to be born in that world due to the similarity of conditions which they are expected to experience.

The philosopher Kant thought that space and time are empirically real and transcendently ideal. The ideas of space and time are, according to him, required to give form and order to the manifold of sensations which are not

presented in an ordered form. Space and time are perceptual categories, they are the necessary conditions of all perception. Space is said to represent and determine the form of external perception, while time represents and determines the perception of internal states. They are empirically real, for they constitute not mere forms of perception but actual perceptions themselves. They are the sense-data which, with the structure of the understanding, make all definite human knowledge possible. They are transcendently ideal, for they are ultimately *a priori* forms of perception and are contributed somehow by the nature of the sensibility and the understanding. The view of Kant seems to be that space and time have a meaning only from the point of view of individuals, though they are universal in the sense that they are valid also for other minds.

### **The Relativity of Space and Time**

The absolute character of space and time has been denied by the physical theory of relativity. The three-dimensional space and the one-dimensional time which were supposed to have absolute validity have now been found to be welded together into a primordial stuff of space-time, of which the space and time which we ordinarily know are mere abstractions. The real physical world is, therefore, a four-dimensional realm with the ideas of up and down, right and left, forward and backward, and before and after for its constituents. These four sets of relations are to be taken into consideration in determining the character of any particular event. The theory of relativity has further led to modify our conception of

matter which, it holds, is not an independent entity by itself, but is constituted of twists and turns or wrinkles in the space-time manifold. Space and time are discovered to be relative to the position and motion of the observers and the systems of reference which they employ. When these systems change, the significance of space and time also changes accordingly. The significance is, however, universal and not merely individual. The position has been summed up by James Jeans, thus: "Thus we conclude, with a high degree of probability, that the space-time unity and the objects which figure in it cannot be mere constructs of our individual minds, but must have existences of their own, although we know that space and time separately are abstractions of our individual minds from the space-time unity. This does not, of course, touch the question, to which we shall return later, of whether space, time and the material world are or are not of a mental nature, being perhaps the constructs of a consciousness superior to our own. So long as we are concerned only with our sensations, it is all the same whether we regard the world as a mental construct or as having an existence of its own independent of mind—the essential point at the moment is that it cannot be a private mental construct of our own" (*Physics and Philosophy*: p. 192).

The fact that space and time are mental constructs need not necessarily mean that each individual experiencer should have an absolutely independent world. There can be a common space-time for all observers who happen to use the same frame of reference, though there may be differences in the manner of their subjective reactions and

interactions in relation to other individuals of such a space-time-world. This shows that the external world of common experience is not a construct of any particular individual but is the uniform object—with exceptions in respect of subjective reactions—experienced by a number of individual minds, establishing thus an existence of itself with some sort of independence over the perceiving minds. But even the world of a common space-time to different individuals of similar frames of reference must fall within the construct of a cosmic mind which should include all subjects and objects of perception. The space-time world is extra-mental to individual experiencers, but mental to the cosmic experiencer. The reality of the external world to individual experiencers cannot be obviated as long as experience is confined to individuality, for the curious fact that is often forgotten is that the individuals experiencing the world are themselves contents of the world as far as their constitution is concerned, though their essential consciousness ought to be construed to belong to a realm that is beyond space-time. But from the point of view of the ultimate consciousness, the reality of the world of space-time is revealed, and this ideality has reference and validity only to this consciousness. And as this consciousness is universal, the world of space-time is ideal only to it and not to the individuals. The latter are bound to particular and relative frames of reference of space-time. This bondage is Samsara. The universal consciousness, on the other hand, is the single witness and observer of the totality of all space-time reference and, not being confined to any particular

order of space-time, it is eternally liberated and is identified with supreme freedom and bliss.

The story of Lila and Padma, in the Yogavasishta, demonstrates the truth that the same event can have several dates and locations. An event that may take place for us on a particular day or date need not necessarily mean that it is completely restricted to that particular space-time coordinate. Every event is a universal event and is valid to the whole cosmos, though with the necessary changes required to make it relevant to the realm of being which is valid to all the frames of space-time experience. The past, present and future have no absolute determinations but are significant only in relation to individual experiencers. An event may have a different significance altogether with a different space-time meaning in some other realm of the universe. What is past need not necessarily be past for every one, and this applies to the present and the future also. The only thing that can be said about the truth regarding events is that they occur, ultimately, in *eternity* which does not admit of the differences of past, present and future. The division in the time-series has validity in relation to individuals whose consciousnesses are apparently divided due to their being fastened to particular objects of experience. Any event, taken by itself, and at a single given moment of time, may belong to either the past, or the present or the future in accordance with the space-time coordinate from which it is viewed. And from the point of view of the universal being, an event is a universal process inseparable from the consciousness in which it occurs. The divisions of space and time are, therefore, not truths having

meaning to all experiencers but are, in a sense, working hypotheses constructed for making individual life possible. Space-time is a relation and not an existence. This world of space-time in which we live is not the only possible or the real one. There are as many worlds with as many space-times as there are frames of reference for modes of consciousness. When freed from limitation to any particular frame of space-time, an event reveals its character of being universal, i.e., of being everywhere and at all times, without spatial or temporal confinement of any kind. An event is infinite and eternal if only it can be extricated from particularised space-time references. As Truth is a universal oneness, all events in all space-times should be contained in it as non-different from it.

### **The Phenomenal Character of Space**

A knowledge of space implies a knowledge of the terms that it relates, and a knowledge of these terms, again, requires a knowledge of the space that differentiates them. Space and the things that it relates to determine one another. It is not true that space and time have an existence independent of the bodies which they contain and limit. If there is no individual existence, there is no spatial existence, also. Our dream perception is a clear instance: space and time with the objects appear to be all real while they are seen, but, on waking, the dream space and time vanish together with the dream objects. We do not see merely the dream space and time persisting even when their objects are contradicted in waking. Space and time are inseparably related to their contents, and their contents,

again, are inseparable from the space and time in which they are involved. Without spatial and temporal distinction there is no objectness. This shows that what we perceive is not merely an isolated object but a complex system of reference which determines the nature not only of the object of knowledge but also of the individual constitution of the knower. The threefold process of the relation between the knower, the knowledge and the known, is involved in a particular space-time reference which determines the nature of all the three elements in the process. It is not enough, therefore, if in our search for real knowledge we take into consideration only the object of knowledge as spatially and temporally cut off from the subject, for the great error that is committed in all our objective searches and endeavours is that we disregard the role that is played by ourselves in our activities. What we know is really not any independent object but a complex situation in which the object is involved. And in this situation we ourselves, as knowers, are involved, so that in the degree of reality manifest in the subject and the object of our knowledge there is practically no difference. All quest for genuine knowledge must pay due regard to all the factors that are implicit in the manifestation of knowledge, and, obviously, it is not merely the object that is its determinant. Every act of knowledge includes the characters of space, time, causality, individuality and a distinction between the knower and the known. Unless a critical analysis of all these elements *in their relation to one another* is made in determining the nature of right knowledge, there is no possibility of our attaining it. Real

knowledge is always a whole, and it binds together, in an internal relation, all the constituents which bring it about. This phenomenon gives us an insight into the truth that we live not as private individuals but as inhabitants of a cosmos where each is related to the other in the manner of parts to the whole in a living organism.

That space is not ultimately real is clear from the fact that externality is not ultimately real. Externality is the same as duality in perception, and reality is ever free from it, for what is real is never known as an object. If externality is not real, space cannot be real, and the reality of space is there only as long as externality is recognised as a fact. An inward harmony among things, which is their ultimate essence, discloses the empirical character of space which, by its very nature, does not allow of such a harmony. Discreteness among objects is fundamental to space, and indivisibility is natural to reality. Space-perceptions are determined by the position and velocity of individuals existing as percipients, and in several respects this law applies to time-perceptions also. That space and time are an appearance is discussed by Prof. Taylor on metaphysical grounds. "An all-comprehensive experience cannot apprehend the detail of existence under the forms of space and time for the following reason." "It (i.e. such an experience) would not be of perceptual space and time, because the whole character of our perceptual space and time depends upon the very imperfections and limitations which make our experience fragmentary and imperfect. Perceptual space and time are, for me, what they are, because I see them, so to say, in perspective from the special



standpoint of my own particular *here* and *now*. If that standpoint were altered, my whole outlook on the space and time order would suffer change. But the Absolute cannot look at the space and time order from the standpoint of my *here* and *now*. For, it is the finitude of my interests and purposes which confines me in my outlook to this *here* and *now*. If my interests ... were coextensive with the life of the whole, every place and every time would be my *here* and *now*... “ “An absolute experience must be out of time and out of space, in the sense that its contents are not apprehended in the form of spatial and temporal series, but in some other way. Space and time then must be the phenomenal appearance of a higher reality which is spaceless and timeless” (*Elements of Metaphysics: p. 254*).

### **The Transcendence of Space in the Atman**

The world of space and time has no independent existence; it is included in the Atman or the supreme Self. The Self is the Paramarthikasatta (absolute reality), while the space-time world has only Vyavaharikasatta (pragmatic reality) relevant only to empirical experience. Space has a meaning in the distinction that is commonly made between *in and out, here and there, this and that*, etc. This distinction obtains only so long as there is no recognition of the true relation that subsists between the two points related. The ultimate relation among things is pure consciousness, independent of objects, and the non-experience of it is the condition of the perception of spatial difference. The differentiation of the knowing self from its object is the prerequisite of the appearance of space. The

moment the Self is segregated from the contents of its knowledge, there is the notion of space and time arising in it. In the undivided consciousness of the Self the distinction of *in and out*, *here and there*, etc. gets merged, and space, whose essence is this distinction, gets negated. For the same reason, temporal distinction has no meaning to the Self, for the Self is consciousness which knows even this distinction. The division of time into past, present and future has a spatial import, and the non-spatial Self ought to be non-temporal, too. While the time-series is to be identified with a state of change, the Self which witnesses all change is known to remain changeless. All change is an appearance consequent upon the false isolation of the Self from the objects, and vice versa. The agency of the Self in action, and the validity of action, also, are based on this erroneous notion of the individualisation of consciousness as separated from its objects. The knowledge-essence of the Self becomes evident when its spatial embodiment and temporal confinement are known to be unreal. The individuality of the individual, the plurality of the selves and the diversity of objects are all transcended in the oneness of the Self. The whole of Samsara consists in confinement to space-time, for it arises on account of the misconception that the body is the Self, this misconception being simultaneous with the rise of the notion of space and time. The essence of the Self is knowledge, and this knowledge has no *in and out*, *here and there*, etc., for it is universal. The Kathopanishad declares that whatever is here is also there, and whatever is there is also here, and that he goes from death to death who perceives here

diversity, as it were. In the Atman there is no plurality or duality, and so no space or time. In the words of the Chhandogya Upanishad, the Atman alone is below, above, before, behind, to the right, to the left; the Atman, indeed, is all this. As the Atman is inside as well as outside of all things, space and time are not significant to it. "How did space manifest in the spaceless Brahman? How did East, West, North and South come into existence? This also is a creation or trick of the mind. When you are tired, even a furlong appears to be a mile. When you are vigorous, a mile seems to be a furlong. For a Jivanmukta or seer there is neither time nor space. He beholds Brahman which is timeless and spaceless" (*Philosophy and Teachings: p. 89*).

In his commentary on the Brahmasutras, Swami Sivananda makes the following remarks in regard to space: Ether is not eternal but created. The Purvapakshin says that Akasa is not caused or created because there is no mention to that effect in the creation passage of the Chhandogya Upanishad. He holds that Akasa is eternal and not caused, because the Sruti cited does not speak of it as caused, while it refers specifically to the creation of fire. But, the Siddhantin replies that there is a Sruti which expressly says that Akasa is created. Though there is no statement in the Chhandogya Upanishad regarding the causation of Akasa, yet there is a passage in the Taittiriya Sruti on its origination. 'From that Self sprang Akasa, from Akasa air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth.' It is objected that the Taittiriya text referred to, which declares the origin of Akasa, should be taken in a secondary or figurative sense, as Akasa cannot be created, for it has no

parts. As a spaceless state antecedent to the creation of space cannot be predicated, space cannot be said to have a cause. As space is all-pervading, it must be causeless. Against this objection it may be said that the scriptural assertion that from the knowledge of Brahman everything is known can be true only if everything in the world is an effect of Brahman. Because the Sruti says that the effects are not different from the cause; therefore, if the cause, Brahman, is known, the effects also will be known. If Akasa does not originate from Brahman, we cannot know it by a knowledge of Brahman. And by this the scriptural assertion would become false and Akasa would still remain to be known, as it is not an effect of Brahman. But, if Akasa is created, there will be no such difficulty at all. Hence Akasa has to be admitted to be an effect and as created. It is an element like fire and air, and so it must have an origin. It is the substratum of an impermanent quality, viz. sound, and as such it must be impermanent. This is the direct argument to prove the origin and destruction of Akasa. The indirect argument to prove it is: Whatever has no origin is eternal, as Brahman, and whatever has permanent qualities is eternal, as the soul, but Akasa, not being like Brahman in these respects, cannot be eternal.

We see in this universe that all created things are different from one another. Akasa is separate from earth, etc. And Akasa also must be an effect. It cannot be eternal, and it is not stated by anyone to be self-existent. The all-pervasiveness and eternality of Akasa are only relatively true, for Akasa is not an effect of Brahman. It is not right to say that with reference to the origin of Akasa we could not

find out any difference between its pre-causal states (the time before and after its origination). Brahman is described in the Sruti as not gross and not subtle. The Sruti refers to an Akasa (spaceless) state, a condition devoid of differentiation. Brahman does not participate in the nature of Akasa, and so it is a settled conclusion that before Akasa was produced Brahman existed.

Akasa has an Anitya-Guna (non-eternal attribute), and so it should be Anitya (non-eternal). The perishability of Akasa is known from its being the substratum of the non-eternal quality of sound, just as jars and other things which are the substrata of non-eternal qualities are found to be non-eternal. Scripture and reason show that Akasa has an origin. And this origin is Brahman, which does not admit of non-eternal qualities (*Vide, Brahmasutras: Vol. I, pp. 418-433*). In his *Ten Upanishads*, Swami Sivananda says that space and time manifest themselves first, that the first prerequisite of relative existence is extension and that, when there is time, events come in succession. He concludes that, even when one imagines that nothing exists, space will remain and that, when space is transcended, knowledge of the Self ensues.

### **Time is an Appearance**

Time is non-eternal like space. It is in the nature of things in time to exhibit a tendency to reach beyond themselves towards a state exceeding the present one. All things in this world acquire a meaning when they are understood in terms of their existence in time, and shorn of all relevance to it, they have no significance. Every object or

event in this world is at once connected with a past and suggests a future, though it has also a present. Nothing can exist merely in the present without reference to a past and a future. A present without a past or a future is inconceivable to us, for it means eternity beyond time, of which we can form no idea. Individual existence has a hypothetical present which is inconceivable without reference to what preceded it and what lies ahead of it. It is this connection of things and events with parts of a succession of temporal experience that makes them relative. The world is in time, and time is not in the eternal. Time has a speciality in that individuals have no power to move in it, though they have an ability to travel in space. This, perhaps, explains the phenomenon of our being anxious not so much to be ubiquitous as to be immortal. There is a desire in all beings to perpetuate their existence and their actions, reflecting thereby the presence of an eternal *something* which is their ultimate ideal. The perception of time is the consciousness of the succession of events or cognitive acts, and when attention is centred in a particular fusion of a certain group of successive moments of cognition or acts of awareness, the consciousness of duration within the jurisdiction of that attention goes by the name of the present time.

Things in this world of time do not exist but flow in a series of events. The world is not being but becoming. Time is becoming, while eternity is being. Every event in the temporal world has an infinite past and an infinite future, and the chain of the order of events does not seem to have either a beginning or an end. Though every event is related to every other, our consciousness of an event does not

contain this cosmic relation, but takes the event as a truncated unit in a continuous series of bits of process which seem to be externally related to one another. But in the eternal, the whole can be seen to be present in every one of its parts, which are all connected with it in an internal relation. Temporal events, as viewed from the standpoint of the eternal, are not externally related bits, but a mirroring of the Absolute. As far as ordinary experience is concerned, the consciousness of time cannot be separated from the consciousness of space. Whatever we know is not only in space but also in time. This makes one feel that space and time are not two different realities conditioning experience in different ways, but appearances or aspects of one reality. Modern science calls this matrix space-time or a four-dimensional continuum, the acceptance of which seems to imply the negation of the commonly accepted values of individual bodies that are believed to be contained in space and time taken as separate entities. The truth of individuality lies not in itself alone but in the complex structure of the total experience constituted of different factors, viz. space, time and selfhood. We always think and believe ourselves to be in space and time, and never in a space-time unity, for, to think in a space-time unity would be not to think at all as individual beings.

“Time is a mode of the mind. Time is a mental creation. Time is a trick or jugglery of the mind. Time is an illusion. Brahman is beyond time. It is eternity.” “Tomorrow becomes today and today becomes yesterday. The future becomes the present and the present become the past. What is all this? This is a creation of the mind alone. In Isvara

everything is *present* only, everything is *here* only.” “There is neither day nor night, neither yesterday nor tomorrow in the sun. The mind has created time and space. When you are happy, time passes away quickly; when you are unhappy, time hangs heavily. This is only a relative world. The theory of relativity of Einstein throws much light on the nature of Maya and this world” (*Philosophy and Teachings*: pp. 88-89). “Time is a false thing. When you are concentrated, three hours appear as half an hour. When the mind is wandering, half an hour appears as three hours. In dream, within ten minutes, you see events of a hundred years. The mind will make one Kalpa as one minute and one minute as one Kalpa” (*Ibid*, p. 102). “Time is caused by the succession of events. How can there be time in eternity? Space is distance between two objects. How can there be space when you feel and behold the Self everywhere?” (*Secret of Self-realisation*: p. 75). It is our habit of thinking in terms of a *before* and an *after* that is responsible for our perception of time. In fact, we cannot know time if there are no distinguishable events which we understand to be taking place in space. There is implied an idea of extendedness even in the idea of the succession of events in time. The difference that we observe between two instants of time—and in the perception of this difference alone is contained the meaning of time—can be valid only on the supposition of the existence of space between the instants. Though, in a way, it can be said that space and time rise simultaneously in our consciousness, we seem to discover in it a precedence of the idea of space, without which even instants of time cannot be known. The notion of duality is



common to both the consciousness of space and the consciousness of time. And we are accustomed to think of duality and difference as distinction in space. As the ultimate reality is non-dual, time, which is characterised by the duality of instants, cannot be predicated of it. Reality is not in time. It has neither a past nor a future but has its significance in a transcendent present. This present is not, however, the one that we know here with our minds. It is a timeless present, an instantaneous *now*, with which a spaceless infinitude gets fused in a divisionless experience. This is our real Self.

Swami Sivananda teaches that the real is not bound by space and time and that, therefore, whatever is limited to space and time must be unreal. As our knowledge in this world, our thoughts, feelings and reactions are within space and time, they cannot have the character of reality. Space is divisible and reality is indivisible. Space and time disclose in themselves a tendency to self-transcendence. The intellectual habit of taking for granted the finitude of the self does not give us truth. The truth is that reality is not limited to the body but encompasses the whole universe. It is the Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara, all in one. Its essence is Brahman. The misery of life consists in the consciousness of the separation of oneself from the universal reality of Brahman, and perennial bliss is in the experience of the oneness of the self with Brahman. In every act of the mind there is an assertion of the separation of the self from reality, and so it must naturally be of the nature of a hungering for that happiness which it cannot find anywhere in the realm of its operations. Mental activity

is painful, for it is a search for that which it has lost by isolating itself from that which it seeks.

### **Causation: A Law of Necessity**

The human mind is bound up in the idea of causal relation. The cause seems to precede the effect in a temporal sequence. It is impossible for us to think of the occurrence of events independently of the concept of causality. The idea of space and time is intimately connected with this concept. Space, time and cause represent the three basic units of the structure of all conceivable knowledge. The moment an event is known, it is found to be in space and time and is at once linked up with others in a causal change. We either think in terms of space, time and cause or do not think at all. This exhibits the completely empirical character of our knowledge of the world. We are accustomed to think that there ought to be a cause for every effect and that every effect should be related to its cause spatially and temporally. The commonsense view of causality, however, does not stand the test of careful scrutiny. On observation it is found that every cause has another cause behind it, so that no single object or event can be considered to be a cause of a particular effect. There is a series of causes, even as there is a series of effects. If we take into consideration the position of an event in this long chain of causation, we will find that every cause is also an effect with reference to that from which it originated, and a cause in relation to that which it originates. Further, no single factor does ever become a cause of any condition or situation. The ordinary view of causation takes only a bit of

the whole process by way of abstraction, disregarding the other factors which are not open to the immediate observation of the senses and the mind. The question now arises as to whether causation is a fact relevant to the world in itself, or it is only a mental habit to cognise events in a particular way.

Kant held that the mind imposes on the chaotic and disorderly material of the world its own laws of order, regularity, causality, etc., so that our experiences must fit in with the framework of the mind. This framework is supplied by the mind for the arrangement of objects which become the contents of its knowledge. Things of the world, in themselves, are not really related exactly in the way in which the mind supposes them to be; but the recognition of causation in the world of events is a necessary condition of the mind, to be obeyed and fulfilled, if we are to have any experience at all. Modern physics maintains that the mind selects certain aspects of the world, which can fit into the, categories of which it is constituted, and rejects other aspects which remain outside its knowledge. The symbolic world of present day physics is an abstraction of a mental construct from reality, and this abstraction obeys the laws of the mind, of mathematics and of physics. Thus we are led finally to the conclusion arrived at by Eddington that "where science has progressed the farthest, the mind has but regained from Nature that which the mind has put into Nature." We seem to discover ourselves in the world outside.

## **The Meaning of Causal Relation**

Causation implies that one thing proceeds from another thing. But one thing cannot be the cause of another thing if one thing is different from another thing, for causation becomes a relation between two terms, and if there is no such relation, there is no causation. But if there is such a relation, there is no sharp difference between cause and effect. The discovery of the nature of the effect in the cause shows that cause and effect are, essentially, non-different. And if they are non-different, again, there can be no causation, for causation has a meaning only when cause and effect maintain some sort of independence. The causal concept is logically indefensible, and it arises on account of our weddedness to the notion of the spatialisedness of experience. No intelligible explanation of causation can be offered on the basis of the belief in the actual separation of objects from one another. The duality that hampers us at every step becomes a hindrance to a correct understanding of life in its essence. Only on the admission of the universe as a connected process of events, and not a collocation of isolated objects hanging in space, can a satisfactory account of the phenomenon of causation be given. And, if the universe is a continuous process, no one thing or event in it can be said to be the cause of any other thing or event, for, in an unbroken process, every part has to pervade and penetrate every other part, so that everything in it becomes a cause as well as an effect. Every event, at every moment, reflects a universal situation, and does not stand as a witness abstracted from the whole. James Jeans says: "If we suppose that the happenings of Nature are governed by a

causal law, we must suppose that the cause of any effect is the whole previous state of the world, so that every effect has an infinite number of causes.” “Yet in considering any event it is not necessary for all previous events in the history of the world to be considered as separate causes. The effects of the earlier of them are already taken into account in the later, and they need not be allowed for twice over. It is enough to consider a cross-section at one particular instant of time” (*Physics and Philosophy*: pp. 103-104).

That there is something exceedingly wrong with our ordinary notion of causality is pointed out by Prof. C. E. M. Joad, in his *Guide to Philosophy* (p. 219), by a striking illustration from the speed of light. Starting with the explanation that an observer situated in a comet travelling away from the earth and viewing events upon the earth through a telescope will be able to observe the events of the earth when the light-rays travelling from earth reach him, he says that, if the speed of the comet were equal to that of light, the events upon the earth will appear to the observer to cease, since no light-rays carrying the message of the succession of events can catch him up. And if, again, the velocity of the comet were to exceed that of light, the observer will see the sequence of events in reverse order, for he will catch up the light-rays which, travelling from the earth, convey the message of events earlier than those which he has already observed. What we call causes will then appear to the observer in the comet as effects, and our effects will be to him causes. The purport of this illustration is that the idea of cause and effect is not valid to the events

themselves, but that it is dependent upon the point of observation, and that the direction of causation is relative to the position and velocity of the observer. Causation, then, reduces itself to a mental construct, a form of perception and understanding, the way in which our minds are forced to view events. The world of causation cannot be the real world; the real must be other than what we know through the instruments with which we are endowed at present.

### **Causation and Causality**

Arthur Eddington introduces a distinction between causation and causality. Causation is that relation of cause and effect in which there is the notion of the temporal antecedence of the cause to the effect. This is the ordinary commonsense view of the meaning of cause-and-effect relationship. But by causality Eddington understands not a temporal sequence of events valid to observing minds but what he terms a *symmetrical relation* of the totality of the events forming the world, in which the world is conceived of as a complete system of connected events. Whitehead holds a view similar to it when he proposes a reality of the nature of an organismic process. However, we have to add that causality can be said to be objective only in the sense that it is observed not merely by one mind but by all minds. Still it remains a fact that causality is meaningful only to minds and that its extra-mental validity cannot be established, though it may be that we, in the present state of affairs, are obliged to admit that causality is perhaps the way of a cosmic mind and thus enjoys an existence outside

individual minds. But the purely hypothetical character of this supposition cannot be denied. A necessity of thought need not be an uncontradictable truth. James Jeans observes: "We can no longer say that the past creates the present; past and present no longer have any objective meanings, since the four-dimensional continuum can no longer be sharply divided into past, present and future." "If we still wish to think of the happenings in the phenomenal world as governed by a causal law, we must suppose that these happenings are determined in some substratum of the world which lies beyond the world of phenomena, and so also beyond our access." The implication of the quantum mechanics of Dirac is declared to be that there has to be a disappearance of causality from the world we see on account of the possibility of the absence of any unique association of the events in the phenomenal world with the events in the substratum.

### **Cause and Effect are Continuous**

Causation among things outside is to be understood as the individualistic reading of the consequences of an indivisible consciousness appearing as the witness of objects which have it as their existence and content. The function of this universal principle as an unbroken continuum appears, when it is manifest in individuals, as the law of causal relation among things and events. The dynamic self-expression of the Absolute in the world of objects involves a causal relation among them. Thus, causation has a meaning in the empirical world, but is meaningless to the Absolute or to the universe taken as a

whole. In the world of the senses this relation manifests itself as mechanistic causation, but to the understanding it reveals its teleological character. The world is directed by the nature of the Absolute, and so all causation must be a teleological *push* and *pull*, though in the sense-world of mathematical and physical laws mechanism has a full sway. Mechanism and teleology do not contradict each other but form two phases of one truth. The senses cannot observe the purpose hidden in Nature, they can only see a mechanical relation of causation among things. But the higher understanding soars above the mechanism of the sense-world and discovers a supreme purpose in life, towards which evolution directs it.

We have to assume that cause and effect are continuous, as there is no reason why the cause should cease to produce the effect at any given moment of time, for, a moment's cessation may give occasion to a total cessation as the reason for a moment's cessation may apply for all time. There should, therefore, be supposed a ceaseless flow of the cause into the effect; else there would be no causation. But, if there is an unceasing continuity between cause and effect, there would be no difference between the two; and without this difference there is no causation. Neither with difference nor without it between cause and effect does there seem to be any contingency of our giving an account of the causal scheme. Cause and effect are but two sides of a uniform existence which the logical intellect finds itself obliged to interpret as a region of causal relations. The Vedanta holds that the production of the effect is an appearance and the only reality is the cause



which, due to its non-relation to any real effect, cannot even be called a cause. That the cause should have a temporal precedence over the effect is not the truth of things, but only the result of the impossibility of the intellect to think in any other way. The law of the temporal mind is no absolute law, but has a meaning only to itself. The assumption of a first causeless cause producing real effects would be to posit a beginning for the time-series which would have to originate without any reason whatsoever. If causation were real, there would be no chance of ultimate freedom or Moksha. But, from the scriptures we understand that it is possible for us to break the chain of causation and attain the highest beatitude in union with Brahman.

### **The Significance of the Causal Concept**

Swami Sivananda accepts causation as a universal law. “No event can occur without having a positive and definite cause at the back of it. The breaking of war, the rise of a comet, the occurrence of an earthquake or a volcanic eruption, the breaking of an epidemic, thunder, lightning, floods, diseases in the body, fortune, misfortune—all have definite causes behind them.” “There is no such thing as blind chance or accident. The cause is hidden or unknown if we are not able to trace out the cause of a particular accident.” “All the physical and mental forces in Nature obey this grand law of cause and effect. Law and the law-giver are one. Law and God are one. Nature and Nature’s laws are one.” “From the vibration of an electron to the revolution of a mighty planet, from the falling of a mango

to the ground to the powerful willing of a Jnani or a Yogi, from the motion of a runner in the postal department to the movement of radio-waves in the subtle ether, from the transmitting of a telegraphic message to the telepathic communication of a Yogi in the thought-world, every event is the effect of some invisible force that works in happy concord and harmony with the law of cause and effect” (*Practice of Karma-Yoga: pp. 62-63*). “There is perfect continuity of life all throughout” (*Ibid p. 71*).

The concept of causation in the philosophy of Swami Sivananda can be formulated from an explanation of this subject offered in his commentary on the Brahmasutras. He holds, with Sankara, that the effect is non-different from the cause, and that the defects observed in the effects cannot affect the cause, even as the special features of a jar are not, when it is broken and resolved into the cause, taken into the cause. The world conceived of as an effect is not a changeless reality, and hence, when it is reabsorbed into its cause, viz., Brahman, the defects of the former are not taken over into the latter. Brahman is the Vivarta-Upadana (apparent material cause) of the world, and not its real cause, and so the qualities of the world cannot taint Brahman in any way. We see in the world that a magician conjuring up various phenomena is not affected by them even in the least. Further, all the characters of the world are not really absorbed into Brahman at the time of its dissolution. Certain characteristics of the individuals who have not attained liberation at the time of the dissolution of the world remain then in a potential state and provide the necessary cause for the subsequent creation of the world.

The case is analogous to the state of waking following deep sleep. The potentiality for creation remains unseen in the condition of dissolution. The fact that particular effects are produced from particular causes, and not from things entirely dissimilar to them, shows that the effect is non-different from the cause and exists in the cause even before origination. Prior to its causation the effect is unmanifest in the cause. In creation the effect gets manifested. An effect which was non-existent in its cause cannot come into being. There is no entirely new creation, for all creation is a manifestation of what existed previously in a latent state. "The effect is not different from the cause. The effect, the world, is not different from the cause, Brahman. As the cause, Brahman is Ananda or bliss. There is reflection of bliss in the effect, the world. The essence of the world is the same as Brahman" (*Secret of Self realisation*: p. 96). "In this world, everything has a cause and an effect. The seed is the cause of the tree, and so on. How can there be cause and effect in Brahman which is the causeless Cause, which is self-existent, which is not an effect of anything?" (*Ibid* p. 75). "An effect does not exist apart from its cause. For instance, a pot does not exist apart from clay, its material cause. Similarly, this universe does not exist apart from Brahman, its material cause. It has no independent existence" (*Self-Knowledge*: p. 4).

The effect appears to us to proceed from the cause on account of a defect in our perception of the cause. There is nothing in the effect which is not contained in the cause, and even the spatial distance between the two is logically inadmissible. Such distinction is empirically made by the

relative conditions of individual perception. If the effect is really non-existent in the cause, and if it is true that a new effect entirely different from the cause is capable of being produced, we cannot, even by an effort of imagination, conceive of its coming into being at all. No attempt on the part of an external agent can be of any avail in bringing forth an effect which is not at all the cause. Nothing can originate from nothing. Oil cannot be pressed out of sand by any amount of ingenuity or effort. There is an inseparable relation between cause and effect, and this can be intelligible only when the effect is understood as an unfoldment of the cause, and the cause as the latency of the effect.

The fact that the effect is non-different from the cause establishes the truth that the real is the cause and not the effect. The Chhandogya Upanishad declares that Brahman which is the ultimate cause is, alone, real, even as clay alone is real as the cause of all things that are made of it. As there is nothing but clay in a jar made of clay, so there is nothing but Brahman in this world. As the jar is not separate from the clay of which it is an appearance, so is the world non-different from Brahman on which it appears. From this it is also clear that a knowledge of the cause at once implies a knowledge of all its effects. When clay is known, all its effects also are known. When Brahman is known, the whole world is known. All modification is a play of speech, a mere name; the original substance alone is real. The Upanishad teaching leads to the conclusion that the name and the form of the effect are not in its cause, while the essential nature of the cause is in the effect. Only on the acceptance of the

proposition that the effect is non-different from the cause can the passage of the Sruti—that with the knowledge of Brahman everything is known—have any meaning, for the knowledge of a cause cannot imply the knowledge of an effect which is different from it. Though all causes seen in the world have some other cause behind them, Brahman, which is the ultimate cause, has no other cause behind it, for the Sruti declares that the great Self is unborn and undecaying (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: IV. 4. 25*): Brahman is eternal being and not an effect of any cause.

### **The Evolution of Name and Form**

Swami Sivananda delineates the Vedanta theory of the evolution of the universe in his *Vedanta in Daily Life, Self Knowledge* and *First Lessons in Vedanta*. The method adopted is deductive, for the story of evolution begins with the affirmation of Brahman and its Sakti or the eternal Power or self-expression as the ultimate cause of the universe. As there is a limited mind in the individual, there is an unlimited mind in the cosmos. This cosmic mind in its unmanifested state exists in a primordial cause of all things, called Mula-Prakriti, or simply Prakriti. Prakriti is the Sakti of Brahman. It is the state of the equilibrium of the essences constituting the universe. The universe remains in a latent state in Prakriti, which is the mother of all phenomena, visible and invisible. Prakriti is constituted of three metaphysical properties, called Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattva is the state of equilibrium of intelligence, harmony of forces and freedom from want. In it there is no distraction whatsoever. There is no movement caused by

the presence of any sense of imperfection. It may be compared to a clean glass or a mirror, not stained by any colour, through which the intelligence of the Absolute gets reflected, as it were. Sattva is purity and dynamic consciousness. Etymologically, Sattva is the state of *being*. It is, however, not perfect being but approximate to pure being. One who is in the state of Sattva enjoys the blessedness and bliss of Brahman.

Rajas is distraction, activity, movement, disturbance. There is vibration, motion, when there is a manifestation of Rajas. In Sattva there is equilibrium, and in Rajas there is objectivity, motion in its subtle form. Activity starts when Rajas begins to operate. This is the cause of division and separation of existence. The third property of Prakriti is Tamas. It is inertia, unconsciousness and fixity, where there is no manifestation of intelligence. There is an excess of the manifestation of Tamas in inanimate objects. A predominance of Tamas characterises the non-intelligent universe. It is manifest, in some degree, even in animate beings.

An object can be in three conditions: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—harmony, activity or inertia. Usually, the human mind never enjoys a state of this primary Sattva. It is ever in a state of secondary Rajas or Tamas. The mind of man always functions objectively; it is either active or inactive. When it is active, it is in a state of Rajas; when it is inactive, it is fixed in Tamas. It is very difficult for one to conceive of absolute Sattva. Sometimes, in states of ecstasy, Sattva, like a flash of lightning, manifests itself in the human mind also. Whenever we are happy, there is an expression of Sattva in

us. When there is merely a movement or vibration, which is the quality of Rajas, there can be no experience of happiness. Happiness can be manifest only in Sattva, in a state of the equilibrium of mind, and not in Rajas. Consciousness can be manifest in Rajas, but happiness requires a subtler medium for its expression. But through Tamas neither intelligence nor happiness can be made manifest. Joy, intelligence and existence are revealed in Sattva, intelligence and existence in Rajas and existence alone in Tamas. Even inanimate things are; they exist: the other two qualities are not visible in them.

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the ultimate stuff of which the Prakriti consists. The cosmic mind is a manifestation of Brahman in primary Sattva. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are not qualities of Prakriti in the sense of qualities seen in things of the world. When we say, for example, 'this cloth is blue,' we mean that blueness is a quality of the particular piece of cloth. Here the quality and substance are two different things. Blueness does not constitute the cloth, nor does it form any part of the stuff of the cloth. It is not in this sense that Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are called properties of Prakriti. In the world we see that a quality inheres in a substance, and it cannot exist without a substance. But Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are not qualities inhering in Prakriti, as in a substance, but form the very existence of Prakriti. We may bring out the significance of these primeval modes by the analogy of a rope with three strands. The strands are entwined together to form the rope. The strands are not the qualities of the rope, but form the substance out of which the rope is made. The rope does not

exist without the strands. It is in the sense of the relation of the three strands to the rope that Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are said to be properties of Prakriti. They are not its external attributes but its essence and existence. And all substances in the world are made up of these three modes by permutation and combination.

These primordial properties exist in the cosmic mind and the individual mind, which bear the relation of cause and effect, or original and reflection, respectively. In the cosmic mind they exist as free media manifesting Brahman in its infinitude. But in the individual they become the secondary media manifesting a distorted form of reality in the structures of personalities and their natures. The cosmic manifestation of Brahman in pure Sattva becomes the cosmic mind in its original form, unmanifested, as if in a state of cosmic sleep. This sleep is not, however, the unconscious sleep known to individuals. Rather, it is a sleep where consciousness does not lose itself in ignorance but retains its freshness and omniscience. When Brahman manifests itself in the property of cosmic Sattva, it assumes the form of the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe. This first manifestation of Brahman in cosmic Sattva is called Isvara. Isvara is different from Brahman in the sense that He is in relation to the universe, while Brahman is independent of all cosmic relations. Isvara is Brahman appearing as the immanent principle in all things. For practical purposes in spiritual Sadhana, this distinction between Isvara and Brahman need not be made. The distinction is essential only in a technical study of first



principles. Brahman with the relations of the universe is Isvara and Isvara without such relations is Brahman.

Brahman is also manifest in cosmic Rajas. Now, this manifestation of reality in a dividing force becomes the origin of the appearance of the different individuals in the universe. In cosmic Sattva there is no division. Hence Isvara is omnipresent. But the individuals are localised, for, they are the results of the appearance of consciousness through Rajas, the force of individuation, division and separation of existence. And when this manifestation takes place in cosmic Tamas, the history is different. Here no consciousness is to be seen, not even individual consciousness. Only existence is felt, nothing more. Even this feeling of the existence of the cosmic Tamas belongs to other conscious beings, not to the Tamas itself. The stone does not know that it has no knowledge. It is we, human beings endowed with understanding, that say that it has no consciousness. In Tamas there is no joy, no intelligence, but only unconscious existence. The stone, however, is not a product of cosmic Tamas in its pure form; it is the result of the mixing up of its derivatives. This primary Tamas is very subtle, and has a supersensible existence.

### **The Projection of the Universe**

Brahman appears as phenomenal being: as God, the individuals and the universe. A more detailed analysis of the manner of the manifestation of Brahman through Tamas is necessary for a clear comprehension of the nature of the evolved universe. Cosmic Tamas divides itself into two forces, having two functions to fulfil: Avarana and

Vikshepa. Avarana is *veiling* or *covering* of consciousness. A light that is covered with a bushel is not visible, though it is present there. Consciousness, in a like manner, is covered by the Avarana-Sakti. This Avarana, too, is twofold: Asattavarana (veiling of the existence-aspect of reality) and Abhanavarana (veiling of the consciousness aspect of reality). We are deprived of a knowledge not only of the nature of Brahman but even of its existence. But there is something worse. We are not merely ignorant of Brahman in a negative way, on account of Avarana; there is a further positive error that we commit—the perception of the external world—which is the work of Vikshepa. Vikshepa is distraction, the projecting power, and it forms the second property of cosmic Tamas. Tamas, therefore, in one of its aspects, causes the appearance of the external universe, and here it is aided by cosmic Rajas in the act of creating a diversity of individuals. As the one mind divides itself as the subject and the objects in dream, the one cosmic mind appears as the subject and the objects in the waking state. This, then, is the twofold function of cosmic Tamas—the veiling of consciousness and the projection of an object before it.

This cosmic Vikshepa-Sakti ramifies itself into five subtle essences called Tanmatras. These Tanmatras are termed Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha. Sabda is the principle of sound, Sparsa of touch, Rupa of sight or form, Rasa of taste and Gandha of smell. These five essences exist in their subtle form at the time of evolution. They are all-pervading and constitute the whole cosmos in its subtle aspect. These essences, too, have their properties of Sattva,

Rajas and Tamas in a secondary way. The eternal modes have a primary as well as a secondary aspect. As primary modes they are free from the limitations to which the individuals are subject. Evil, suffering, pain, and the like, are seen to be occasioned only in the individual aspects of these modes, for they become incapable of manifesting, in this condition, the pure universal essence of consciousness.

Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha have, in each of them, the three properties of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, in their secondary conditions. The Sattva portions of each of the five Tanmatras blended together to form a whole constitute the psychological organs, viz. Buddhi (understanding and willing), Manas (thinking and feeling), Ahamkara (ego) and Chitta (memory). These are the main functions of the internal organs in us. These Sattva portions of the Tanmatras, taken individually, form the senses of knowledge or cognition. The Sattva of Sabda becomes the sense of hearing, the Sattva of Sparsa becomes the sense of touch, the Sattva of Rupa becomes the sense of seeing, the Sattva of Rasa becomes the sense of taste and the Sattva of Gandha becomes the sense of smell.

The Rajas portions of the five Tanmatras, put together, constitute the vital energy or Prana. There are five forms or functions of the Prana within us, viz. Prana, Apana, Vyana, Samana and Udana. Prana is the outgoing breath. Its seat is the heart and it does the work of respiration. Apana is the ingoing breath. It is located in the anus and it does the function of excretion. Vyana is all over the body and it is responsible for the circulation of blood in the entire system. Samana is situated in the navel and it does the work of

digesting the food that is consumed. Udana is in the throat and it causes the separation of the subtle body from the physical body at the time of death. It also causes deglutition and takes the individual to Brahman during deep sleep. These five forms of the Prana constitute the collective totality of the Rajas portions of the five Tanmatras. Taken individually, these Rajas portions form the five organs of action. The Rajas of Sabda becomes the organ of speech, the Rajas of Sparsa becomes the organ of grasping (hands), the Rajas of Rupa becomes the organ for locomotion (feet), the Rajas of Rasa becomes the organ of generation and the Rajas of Gandha becomes the organ of excretion. There are also five other minor Pranas, called Naga, Kurma, Krikara, Devadatta and Dhananjaya, performing, respectively, the functions of causing belching or hiccup, closing and opening of the eyelids, hunger, yawning and nourishing the body as well as decomposing it on its death.

The Tamas portions of the five Tanmatras become the gross visible universe by a process called Panchikarana, which means quintuplication. The earth, water, fire, air and ether which we perceive through the senses are the products of this peculiar process of the mixing up of the five forms of the Tamas elements in the Tanmatras. Quintuplication is the process by which half of each Tamas element is mixed with one-eighth of each of the four remaining Tamas elements. Ether, for example, is constituted of half of the Tamas portion of the Tanmatra of Sabda, together with one-eighth of the Tamas portion of each of the other four forms of Tamas in the Tanmatras of Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha. In a similar way, the other

four great elements (Mahabhutas) are formed. Our physical bodies, too, are constituted of these five quintuplicated elements (Panchikrita-Bhutas). The worlds manifested are, however, of varying natures. “Vasishtha tells Rama, in the Yogavasishtha: ‘At one period Siva creates all the universe; at another period Brahma; at another period Vishnu; then the Munis, and so on. Sometimes Brahma is born in a lotus, sometimes in the mundane egg, sometimes in Akasa (ether). In one creation, powerful trees alone will exist in this universe; in another the earth alone; in another stones alone; in another flesh alone; and in another gold alone. Thus will it be in diverse ways. During the several creations, the foremost is sometimes ether, sometimes air, sometimes fire, sometimes water and sometimes earth. Herein I have but briefly described to you the creation of one Brahma. The order of evolution will not be the same in all Yugas (cycles of creation), but will vary with different Yugas. Krita (the first Yuga or the golden age) and other Yugas will recur again and again. There is no object in this world which does not cycle round many times” (*Lectures on Yoga and Vedanta: p. 232*). This is the structure and constitution of the universe that is made explicit in the process of evolution.

### **Design in the Evolutionary Process**

Human evolution is directed towards ultimate self-perfection. With a long quotation, Swami Sivananda ratifies the following thesis regarding evolution and its significance: “It is the progress of the Thinker in man, from his present condition of limitedness to the state of the

unlimited Self. Progress of the Thinker means improvement and growth of the mind through which he thinks. In the physical plane, all vegetable and animal bodies develop out of the life-germ, the unit-cell. The embryonic cell sometimes divides itself into two or more cells, and sometimes, as in the case of the lower forms of life, it becomes associated with new cells drawn from outside. In any case, development of the embryo implies multiplication of cells. Mere multiplication of cells, again, cannot make a living body. Along with it, there is also the widening or expansion of life within, so as to control all the cells together. Similarly, a man's mind is said to grow or expand when his thoughts extend beyond his physical body and his limited personality. As the original unit-cell is the earliest and lowest state of the physical body, thoughts of one's own interests alone belong to the lowest stage of the mind. The mind grows when the interests of others are also considered, as the physical body grows up, packing together more cells. As there is a connecting life for all the cells together, selfless thoughts or thoughts of others' interests should be bound up together by a connecting and unifying knowledge that all are the Self. The end of the evolution of the Thinker is reached when the evolving mental life becomes, by expansion, identical with the all-including Life" (*Practice of Karma-Yoga*: pp. 171-72).

"They say that evolution is going on in the universe; but what it is that is evolving they have nothing to say about. They observe different natures, bodies and objects in the universe, occupying different positions in some respects, and seeing that one is more 'advanced' than another, they

make a regular scale, noting the different degrees of advancement. But they do not say that what is now found in the more advanced state of being must, in its essence, have been in existence formerly and must have been then in a less advanced condition. In other words, they do not say that the underlying entity which bears a more advanced form or exhibits a higher state or condition today is the same as that which formerly appeared in a coarser garb or functioned in a lower kind of existence” (*Ibid*, p. 167). Evolution is of name and form and not of essence. And even name and form are not evolved in any arbitrary way. There is no way of explaining evolution except by resort to the law of Karma. In this connection, a bold and ingenious theory is countenanced in the following passage: “Is a vegetable capable of doing any responsible act or Karma for which it is rewarded? If it is itself not capable of doing any, is its ascent in evolution compulsory and due to the act of another agent? If so, does it mean that the fruits of action may go to one who did nothing to merit them? Among the lower animals themselves, one is found more happy throughout its life-period, from the moment of its birth, than another. Why should it be so? The differences in the animal’s experience of pain and pleasure must have their own causes. What are they? The causes must relate to the previous existence of every such Jiva in question. This previous life could not have been that of a lower animal; for, lower animals can do no responsible Karma. The law of Karma and justice, if it is true at all, shows unmistakably that there is no real foundation for the notion that there is evolution (caused by conscious action) going on below the

stage of man. Every brute, every little insect and everyone of the plants and trees—all were and are going to be again human beings themselves. They are all temporarily suspended from the class of humanity for some offences” (*Practice of Karma-Yoga*: pp. 169-70). To the objection that, “if all non-human states of being are only the results of previous human Karma, there must have been only men and none else in the beginning stage of the universe,” it is replied that “this question assumes that there was a beginning for the universe,” and “as there was no beginning for the universe, there could not have been any period of time when there were men alone” (*Ibid*, pp. 170-71). The position is that at all times there have been human as well as non-human states of being in the manifested universe, so that the condition that any experience in a sub-human state should be traced back to some previous human state need not necessarily mean that human and sub-human beings cannot coexist at all stages of the universe.

According to Lamarck, the evolution of sense-organs is preceded by hidden desires or needs of the living organism, compelling the expression of the sense-organs for the purpose of actualising these urges or needs. The inner functions are the causes of the development of the external organs. The inner needs get developed into desires which materialise themselves as individual effort, on the part of the organism, to bring out the necessary instruments for the performance of the specific functions prompted by its fundamental needs. Thus, the desire to see, hear, smell, taste and touch acts as a causative force to evolve the organs of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin, respectively. Needs



of the organism, however, are conditioned by the nature of the environment under the influence of which the organism becomes what it is. The universe as a whole may be said to be in travail at the birth of any single entity in it. The organs of action, in the same way, are consequences of the desire to act in particular ways. The restraint of the senses, then, is the overcoming of the inner force of desire. The Yogavasishtha propounds a similar theory of the origin of the senses and limbs in living organisms. "The thought or design which is at work in the growth and development of organised structures is not a mere mechanical power or cunning acting from without—shaping, adjusting, putting together materials prepared to its hand, constructing them according to an ingenious plan, after the manner of a maker of machines. Here, on the contrary, the idea or formative power goes with the matter, and constitutes the very indwelling essence of the thing... Nor, for the building up and completing of the structure, is there any call for the interposition of external agency. From first to last it is self-formative, self-developing" (John Caird: *The Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 137-138). God is the immanent existence of the world; the world is the appearance of God and is the process of the Self-realisation of every individual. In this process the present is determined by the past and is guided by the future purpose towards which it is directed. As this purpose is an eternal presence envisaged by time, it takes the form of a mechanistic as well as a teleological evolution, thus reconciling both ways in its timeless advance.

## Purpose in Nature

The universe is a purposive structure which exhibits signs of the existence of an intelligent directing force within it, pointing to the realisation of an aim in which the time-process is completely overcome. It works in the manner of an organism in which the parts are subservient to the whole and determine the characteristics of one another by reciprocal relation. The teleological character of the universe is explained by the principle that an organic whole is the fulfilment of the aspirations of its parts and is the home of their value. If evolution is creative, it must have a direction, a way to its destination. Even Darwin's theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest can have meaning only on the acceptance of a final purpose unseen at present. The struggle for existence is ultimately a struggle for perfect existence, unimpeded by external force or environment and unrestricted by outward laws. Mechanism rules in the world of space-time, but life points to an ideal beyond it. "The life of man is an indication of what is beyond him and what determines the course of his thoughts, feelings and actions. The wider life is invisible, and the visible is a shadow cast by the invisible which is the real. The shadow gives an idea of the substance, and no one can pursue the path to the true substance by the perception of the shadow. Human existence, by the fact of its limitations, wants and various forms of restlessness, discontent and sorrow, points to a higher desired end, incomprehensible though the nature of this end be. As life on earth is characterised by incessant change, and nothing here seems to have the character of reality, nothing here can

satisfy man completely. The Bhagavadgita has referred to this world as impermanent, unhappy, the abode of sorrow, and transient. The sages of yore declared with *immediate* intuition that Truth is one, and that the goal of human life is the realisation and experience of this Truth" (*The Divine Life: vol. XIX, p. 173*).

The biological evolution of organisms brings about changes in their organs and constitution as a whole, not by accident or chance, but due to their inner demands or needs for a different kind of experience, in order to adjust and adapt themselves to newer types of environments. This is guided by a teleological factor within, a purpose to be fulfilled in the various stages of evolution. The selection of organismic entities in evolution is not so much *natural* as *rational*. Evolution is directed by an inner purpose, an urge to unfold in every principle the ultimate indivisibility of being. The Absolute does not only *push* the elements from within, as their true existence, but also *pulls* them from the front, as their final goal. In the mechanical whole, "the parts precede the whole and produce it by being put together. In the organic whole, on the other hand, the parts themselves are conditioned by the whole and are only possible in it. In the organic whole, therefore, the end, which is to come out of it, determines the beginning" (W. Windelband: *An Introduction to Philosophy, p. 145*).

The great play of evolution is enacted within the organism of the universe directed by its own necessity and law. Absolutely independent individual organisms do not exist. They are all threaded together, as it were, by the universal consciousness running through all of them. The

evolution of the individuals has its purpose in their realisation of the ultimate truth, goodness and beauty of the universe, which is a temporal translation of the eternal. The highest end is the realisation of eternity in Brahman, which is at once the efficient and the material cause of all things, in two different phases of its manifestation. It is also the instrumental as well as the final cause of the whole scheme of evolution and involution. Differences in the concepts of different kinds of cause arise on account of the different standpoints from which the one reality is viewed. The universe is Brahman appearing. Nothing happens in it, nothing is outside it, and yet all things happen because of it and for it. There is only one purpose discoverable in all activity—the attainment of a higher state of existence by transcending the lower one, the final consummation being Self-realisation. Here the purpose of evolution is served, all processes reach their end, all activities fulfil their aim and the goal of life is, at last, reached.

## **CHAPTER VII: THE PHENOMENALITY OF EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE**

### **The Non-Difference of the World from its Cause**

A clue to the structure of the world is given us by an investigation into the nature of causation and the resultant discovery that the effect is non-different from the cause. If the world is an effect, it must be non-different from Brahman, which is its cause. Individualistic perception is accustomed to make a distinction between effect and cause, between the world and reality. That the world is transitory is a fact borne in on us by its constant nature, its subjection to evolution and involution and its tendency to point to a being that is beyond itself. The things of the world are not ends in themselves, a fact which discloses itself in the constant urge that is seen in individuals to outgrow their limitations and aspire for a higher realisation. The contents of the world do not seem ultimately to satisfy any aspiring soul. The effect always yearns to unite itself to its cause, for its reality is not in itself but in its cause. The world can never be happy by itself, for its happiness is in its reality which is Brahman. The misery of the world is but the consequence of the erroneous consciousness that the effect is different from the cause, that the world lies outside Brahman. It is this error that is responsible for the unrest of the world and of the unceasing struggle of everyone to reach out to some permanent happiness. The relation between Brahman and the world cannot be strictly one of cause and effect. We cannot conceive of cause and effect without imagining at the same time a difference between the two. As Brahman is the sole existence, there can be nothing second to it, and if there is nothing other than it,

there can be no effect outside it. The world is either one with Brahman or different from it. In the former case, there would be no world, and in the latter, no causation, and so, again, no world. That the world is a creation of Brahman is not an ontological truth but an empirical necessity arising out of the habit of the mind to seek a cause for every effect. The scriptures declare that there is freedom from the bondage of the world, but this freedom would be impossible if the world were a real effect. The highest bliss can be only in the knowledge of the non-difference of the world from Brahman.

The appearance of Brahman as the world is not analogous to the transformation of a cause into its effect. Brahman does not *become* the world but *appears* as the world. The rope never transforms itself into a snake, even when it appears to have all the characteristics of the snake, owing to erroneous cognition. The hypothesis that Brahman transforms itself into the world is logically unacceptable, for whatever is subject to transformation of essence is liable to destruction. The eternal Brahman does not really become the world. Real change of a substance is tantamount to its annihilation. The Upanishads proclaim that Brahman is the supreme ideal of life, and so its annihilation can never be conceived. The world is not a Parinama (modification) but a Vivarta (appearance) of Brahman. Brahman appears as the world, not in the manner of milk turning into curd, but of a rope appearing as a snake. Only the Vivarta view of manifestation can satisfactorily support the validity of scriptural statements, and also stand the test of reason. If Brahman has already

become the world by a process of transformation of its being, then there is no Brahman whose realisation we can aspire for, and there is no Moksha or freedom of the soul from the bondage of Samsara. In the Vivarta view of the manifestation of the world, there is no such inconsistency involved, for, on this view, an effect appears on the substratum of the cause without there being an actual change in the being of the cause. The appearance of the world has to be attributed to wrong knowledge and not to an actual modification of Brahman.

The change of forms that we observe is not a change of reality. The substance remains unchanged and continues in spite of the appearance of the change of forms that takes place on it as its basis. The substance cannot be destroyed in the process of the change of its qualities or forms. In all change, the existence of a consciousness that knows all change, but does not itself get involved in change, has to be admitted. If even the consciousness of change were to change, there would be no such thing as consciousness of change. Change implies the changeless; the impermanent is known on the ground of the permanent. And if cause and effect are identical, even this change cannot be real. Change becomes an appearance, a phenomenon necessary and valid for an empirical individual, but inadmissible in reality. There is a logical contradiction involved in the non-acceptance of a changeless reality behind change and the acceptance, at the same time, of the reality of change. If change is to be real, reality ought to change; but nothing that changes can be ultimately real. Brahman which does not change is real, and the world which changes is unreal.

The apparent existence of the world is borrowed from the being of Brahman, bereft of which the world is nothing.

### **The Meaning of Appearance**

In our concept of the world are included the different degrees or grades of objective reality that presents itself to our empirical consciousness. The world is certainly not existent like Brahman, for it is subject to change and transcendence. It is also not non-existent like a human horn, for it appears to our consciousness. The term world includes also the objects seen in illusions and dreams. But the world, as it is commonly understood, consists of the objects of waking experience. The waking world has a practical reality that appears to have a higher workable value than the experiences in illusions and dreams. Illusory perceptions and dream phenomena have an apparent existence (Pratibhasikasatta), while the world of waking has an empirical existence (Vyavaharikasatta). Transcending these lower forms of existence is absolute existence (Paramarthikasatta) or Brahman. The world is real as non-different from Brahman, but unreal as consisting of particular names and forms. In none of the degrees in which it manifests itself can the world be ever denied, but has to be accepted as valid in its varying expressions of reality. It is real when it is experienced but unreal when contradicted in a higher consciousness.

The difference between Maya and Avidya that is recognised in the Vedanta explains the distinction between metaphysical idealism and subjective idealism. Maya is the substance out of which the whole world is manifested, the



common ground of the expression of forms that are valid for all individuals experiencing them. Maya has an objective existence; it is the cause of even the internal organ (Antahkarana), the principle constituting the individuality of an individual. Avidya, on the other hand, is subjective and private, not universal and necessary for everyone, but restricted to different individuals. The world of Avidya is different from the world of Maya. This important feature is brought out in the famous distinction that is made between Jivasrishti and Isvarasrishti. Jiva is the experiencing individual and Isvara is the immanent intelligence of the universe. Isvarasrishti is the world of Maya, equally applicable to all percipients. But Jivasrishti is the world of Avidya, the plane of subjective relations and reactions abstracted from the creation of Isvara. The Jiva is a part of Isvara, and the body of the Jiva is one among the objects of the world projected by Maya which is the principle that defines Isvara. The objects of sense-perception are, therefore, not mere ideas or fancies in the mind of the subject. They are objective facts, as real as any knowing subject. The objects are different from the knowledge we have of them, for the knowledge of objects is on par with the reality of their forms. The structure of knowledge is determined by the form of the object. Perception is different from memory and imagination, because their objects are different. There is an immediacy of presentation in actual perception, but the objects of memory and imagination are mediate and remote. What is known merely to ideas is differentiated by us from what is known by the senses. This also accounts for the distinction made

between waking and dream, notwithstanding the similarity of the framework in which experience is given to us in both these states. Dream and waking are different in the quality of knowledge that is manifest in them, though the mould in which experience is cast is the same in both the states. The subject and the object are always of the same degree of reality as far as the particular experience confined to them is concerned. The Vedanta theory of knowledge is a radical realism inasmuch as it accepts the outside world as independent of the knowledge which the subject has of it. But the question as to the ultimate nature of the objects of knowledge is a different thing altogether. An object may be independent of the mind which perceives it, and yet it may not be material in nature. Though the Vedanta holds that objects are extra-mental in so far as their relation to the subject is concerned, it recognises the ideality of all things in general in relation to the cosmic mind of Isvara. If the objects of the world are not contained in our minds, they are contained in the mind of God. This is the metaphysical idealism of the Vedanta as opposed to subjective idealism. The objects are essentially phases of consciousness, they are Vishayachaitanya. The reality behind both the subject and the object is Brahmachaitanya or the absolute consciousness.

While commenting on the Brahmasutras, dealing with the refutation of the Buddhist idealists, Swami Sivananda touches the point of difference between materialism and subjectivism on the one hand and a higher absolutism on the other. The Buddhist idealists have advanced sufficiently strong arguments against the materialist conception of the

world. The existence of matter independent of knowing minds cannot be established. Matter that has no relation to mind is not known to exist. But the position of the Buddhist idealist, as it is generally understood, is not completely acceptable. It cannot be said that the external world is entirely non-existent, for, if this were the case, even the projection of the internal ideas externally would not be possible, or even conceivable. That there is an appearance outside shows that there is a reality behind it. That the world appears to consciousness intimates to us the existence of a changeless ground, albeit invisible to the senses. A non-existent world cannot be sensed or felt in any way. Even if we are to suppose that consciousness alone appears as an external object, we cannot admit that this appearance is possible without a reality outside, for the very possibility of the externalisation of consciousness proves that there is something outside not directly perceived by the senses. Setting aside the view that the world of sense-perception is totally non-existent as logically untenable, we may admit that the world, at least in one sense, is unreal like dream. But this analogy cannot be stretched too far, for the world of waking life is known to be like dream only under certain conditions and not in all respects. The structure of knowledge is the same in waking as well as in dream. In both the states, knowledge is characterised by space, time, the idea of materiality of objects, motion, change, causation and the *presented* nature of things. Further, as dream is contradicted in waking, the waking world is contradicted in the Atman. We cannot, however, deny that the order of the manifestation of knowledge in

dream is different from that in waking, for we are all aware of it instinctively. This distinction has to be clearly understood if we are to have a correct grasp of the sense in which the Vedanta is called an idealistic philosophy. It is a realism epistemologically, but a spiritualistic non-dualism metaphysically. It does not deny the world that is known in any state of consciousness, but it recognises the highest truth of the contradiction of all relative phenomena in Brahman, which alone stands as the ultimately non-contradictable principle. The objection of Prakashananda in his *Siddhanta-muktavali* that, as dreams are manifestations of consciousness without any real objects underlying them, though they reveal the distinction of subject and object, the world of waking consciousness is devoid of a real content, loses its force unless the relation between dream and waking is understood in the manner pointed out above.

### **Empirical and Apparent Reality**

Swami Sivananda distinguishes between two phases of the universe: the phenomenon and the illusory, the empirical and the apparent, the objective and the subjective. The objective universe is physical, while the subjective is psychical. By the word universe what we really mean is the experience of certain objective conditions. Both the physical and psychical experiences can be grouped under the general category of *experience*. Experience, again, is a term used to denote the awareness of a content in a knowing subject. This content appears as physical in the waking state and psychical in dream, though at the time of

the experience of dream, the contents put on the character of physical entities. A comparative study of dream and waking would give us a clue to the relation between the world and God, between the relative and the Absolute. We usually take it for granted that the entities that we perceive in the waking state are physical, just as in dream, too, we take all percepts as nothing short of physical objects. The same analogy may be applied to our world-experience in the waking state in relation to the Absolute. As on waking one feels that the space, time and matter perceived in dream are comprehended in the waking consciousness, the world of waking life is known to be transcended, together with the waking subject, in a consciousness that rises above all existence and essence known to man.

On a careful scrutiny, another important factor will be seen to characterise our experience in waking as well as in dream. When the waking subject perceives an object, a twofold consciousness is found to be involved in it: a consciousness of the presence of a physical object, a physical state or condition, and a consciousness of the particular relation that the object bears to the subject. One does not merely see an object, but sees it also as having some relation to oneself. One likes it or does not like it, or is indifferent towards it. It is 'mine' or 'not mine', good or bad, pleasurable or painful, necessary or unnecessary, and so on. In fact, it is found that it is hard for one to have a consciousness of an object without at the same time involving a personal relation that obtains in regard to it. Now, this latter aspect of experience, viz., the consciousness of a relation, does not belong to the object, and so it is not

an empirical reality. It is a projection from the subject itself, a reaction to the manner in which the object presents itself to the subject or is taken to exist in relation to the subject. The physical object is always seen to possess a greater reality than the psychical relation. It is this individualistic relation that constitutes all bondage. We have, thus, a complicated structure before us, which we call the world.

### **The Figure of the Cave**

A beautiful illustration is given by Plato, in his Republic, of the general character of the world of sense-perception. Book VII of this great work begins with the famous description of the cave, which may be briefly stated as follows:

And now let me show in a figure how far human nature is enlightened or unenlightened:—Imagine human beings living in an underground den, which has an opening towards light, through which light reaches all along the den. Here these persons have been living from their childhood, their legs and necks chained, so that they cannot move, but can only see things in front of them, they being prevented by the chains from turning their heads round. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way. There is also a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have before them. Men pass along the wall, carrying with them vessels, statues, figures of animals, stones and various other materials, which appear over the wall as shadows. And these inside the cave see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire

throws on the wall which is opposite to the cave. And of the objects which are being carried, in like manner, they see only shadows. And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were addressing what was actually before them? And suppose, further, that the prison produced an echo of sounds that came from the other side. Would they not be then sure to fancy, when one of the passers-by spoke, that the voice which they heard came from the moving shadow? To them the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of substances.

And now, again, see what will naturally follow if the prisoners were released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and enabled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains. The glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which, in his former state, he had seen the shadows. And imagine someone telling him that what he saw before was a shadow and that now, as his eye is turned towards an existence of greater substantiality, he has a clearer vision—what will be his reply? We may further suppose that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and asking him to name them—will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects that are now shown to him? And if he is brought straight before the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away from the light and take refuge in the objects which he can see, and which he will consider to be clearer than the realities which are now being shown to him? He will take time to grow accustomed

to the sight of the upper world. And finally, he will see the sun himself in his proper place, and not as reflected in another, and he will contemplate him as he is. He will then proceed to argue that this is he who causes the seasons and the years and is the maker of all that is visible in the world. And when he remembers his old dwelling, the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, he would greatly felicitate himself on the change that has taken place in him, and pity them for their ignorance. And if he and his companions in the den were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were clever in observing the fleeting shadows and stating which of them went before, or which followed after, and which were together, and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions in this regard, would he, in his present state of enlightenment, care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them?

This entire allegory may be appended to the previous arguments. The prison-house is the world of the senses, the light of the fire is the sun, the journey upwards is the ascent of the soul to the world of Intelligence, and the sun himself may be compared to the supreme Reality. In this supernal world the Idea of the Good appears as the highest essence, and is known only with an effort. And when known, it is recognised to be the universal author of all things. This is the principle upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed. Plato concludes that those who attain to this beatific vision do not descend again to human affairs, for their souls are ever hastening to the upper world of reality.



## The Waking World is Like the Dream World

Swami Sivananda's treatment of the nature of the world as known to man is exhaustive. He touches it from every side and presents a finished product of the analysis and investigation of human experience. There is a world perceived in the waking state, and another known in dream. Both in waking and in dream objects are perceived as different from the subject. The character of *being seen* is common to things in both types of experience. There is subject-object relation in waking as well as in dream. This brings out the characteristic similarity between the two states. 'Something is seen as an object' means that 'something is other than the self.' The experience of the not-self cannot be real, for, if it were real, the self would be limited and unreal. The phenomenal experience of the not-self is common to both waking and dream. In waking the mind experiences external phenomena through the senses, and in dream the mind alone experiences them, independent of the senses. But in both the states the mind alone is the real experiencer of all things, ultimately. Dream is transcended in waking; waking is transcended in the Turiya or the Atman. Waking and dream contradict each other. When the one is, the other is not, and so neither of them is continuously existent. The real is eternal, while waking and dream are non-eternal.

Duality cannot be real, for it is the opposite of eternity. Without duality there is no perception, and hence anything that is perceived externally should be unreal, whether in waking or in dream. Dream is real when there is no waking, and waking is real when there is no dream. These

characteristics demonstrate the unreality of both the states. They depend on each other for their existence and one cannot say whether one is dreaming or waking without referring one state to the other. Desires are the rulers of all experiences both in dream and in waking. During waking, desires move the senses, and in dream, they move the mind independently. Both these states are like flowing streams and do not continue to exist forever in any single condition. The real is that which persists unchangeably in all periods of time. Dream and waking have a beginning and an end. Change is the character of all perceived entities. Change implies non-existence in the beginning and in the end, with a temporary appearance in the middle. That which does not exist in the beginning and also in the end cannot be said to exist really even in the middle. When subjected to this test, dream and waking disclose their unreality.

Anything that is possessed of a form has to be considered to be real, for forms are special modes of consciousness. The forms in the waking state appear to be physical, while those in dream are mental. But all such experience is in terms of forms limited to space and time, and marked off by individuality. A form lasts only so long as that particular mental condition perceiving it lasts, whether this perception is of one mind or many minds. When there is a different mental condition, whether individually or collectively, the forms of perception also change. The form of the world vanishes in Self-realisation, just as dream phenomena are negated in waking.

Both in dream and waking external percepts are considered as real and internal functions as comparatively

unreal. If, in waking, we make a distinction between the real and the unreal, we do the same in dream, too. In both the states the objects of externalised experience are considered to be real entities. The dreaming state is real as long as it lasts; its unreality is revealed only when it is cancelled in waking. And waking, too, is real as long as it lasts, but is superseded in Samadhi or superconsciousness. While dream is unreal from the standpoint of waking, waking is unreal from the point of view of dream. And when compared to the highest Atman in us, waking is as false as dream.

It may be objected that entities in the waking state serve some purpose, while those in dream do not. The incorrectness of this argument becomes patent when we notice that the nature of serving a purpose which is seen in objects of waking experience is stultified in dream, and vice versa. The utility and objective worth of things in the waking state are contradicted in dream, even as the experiences in dream are invalidated in waking. Objects act as means to ends only in particular conditions of the mind, and not at all times. The causal relation of waking is rendered nugatory in dream, and vice versa. The logical sequence of waking experience is valid to itself alone, and not to dream. So is dream valid only to its own state. Further, the nature of serving a purpose is observed in objects of dream, also, while one is in that state. The objects of the waking world have the character of serving a purpose only so long as waking lasts. Both waking and dream have their own notions of propriety, and the one is meaningless

to the other, though each may appear to be real to itself. Neither of them has any ultimate validity.

It may be contended that the objects of dream are queer, fantastic and unnatural, and hence waking cannot be like dream. But the experiences in dream, however grotesque and abnormal, are not so to the dreamer. They appear to be fantastic only in a different state, i.e., in waking. One cannot say what is really queer or unnatural and what is normal and real, unless one thing is compared with another. Independently every conscious condition is valuable to itself. The mind gives values to objects, and its conception of normality and abnormality changes according to the state in which it is and the standpoint from which it compares the relative worth of its experiences. There is no permanent standard of normality or reality, either in waking or in dream. The dreamer has his own conception of the structure of space, time and causation, even as one who is awake has his own notions of them. When viewed from an impartial standpoint, it will be found that there is no ultimate logicity or reality in either of these states.

The world of waking experience is ultimately ideal, for it is the projection of the cosmic mind. The fact that, in the knowledge of the Atman, there is cessation of all phenomena shows that the world of waking is not real. The external forms are the expressions of the internal Sankalpa or willing of Isvara. Hence these objects cannot be said to have a real value of their own. When the Sankalpa is withdrawn, the world of experience vanishes from sight. There is no such thing as externality and internality in the

infinite Subject, viz. the Atman. The ego and the non-ego, the subject and the object, are relative elements contributing to empirical knowledge.

It may be said that the objects seen in waking are not mere mental imaginations, for they are equally seen by other people also, whether or not one's mind cognises them. Here it may be observed that in dream, too, objects are open to the perception of other people in the dream world, though the people as well as the objects of dream are negated in waking. It may also be argued that in waking we perceive things through the sense-organs and not merely through ideas, while it is seen that in dream only ideas begin to operate independently. This notion, however, gets refuted on the observation that even in dream we perceive things through the sense-organs belonging to the dream state, which, then, are not found to be less real than those of the waking state. Waking and dream have striking similarities.

The world of waking does not have any independent existence, because it has the knowing subject as its correlative. An object is called an object because there is a subject perceiving it. Similarly, a subject is called a subject because there is an object to be perceived by it. They lack self-existence and so fall short of reality. The mind perceives objects by relating one thing to another. The world is a bundle of relations which, when attempted to be understood independently, become unintelligible. And it is these relations that the mind attempts to organise into causes and effects.

As cause and effect are continuous, the very scheme of causation falls to the ground. We cannot conceive of a lapse of time in which the cause remains unchanged. If the cause can exist unchanged even for a moment, there is no reason why it should change at any time later. Either there is continuous causation or no causation at all. If causation is continuous, cause and effect become identical; and if they are identical, the process of causation is nullified. If there is no causation, there is no world, also. The whole causal argument seems to be illogical, for it either requires the existence of a first uncaused cause, or is itself meaningless. We cannot, however, conceive of a first uncaused cause, for by it we create a beginning for time. If causation were real, it would never have been possible for anyone to be free from the operation of its law. But scriptures declare that in Self-realisation the chain of causation is broken. As in dream also we experience the causal series, the waking world is false like the dream world.

### **The Waking World has Practical Reality**

Waking experience is comparable to dream when judged from the absolute standpoint. But it has a relative reality (Vyavaharikasatta) which has a practical and workable value. From the standpoint of waking, dream has an apparent reality (Pratibhasikasatta) whose value is restricted to dream alone. The Turiya or the Atman is the absolute reality (Paramarthikasatta) in which both dream and waking are absorbed and transfigured. Waking is relatively more real than dream, and Turiya is more real than waking, though from the point of view of Turiya, both

waking and dream are unreal. But waking, taken by itself, and in relation to dream, has a greater reality than dream. It can be said that, to a certain extent, waking is to dream what Turiya is to waking. Waking is the reality behind dream, and Turiya is the reality behind both waking and dream. Dream is no dream to the dreamer, for only by one who is awake is dream known to be a dream. Waking, in the same manner, appears to be real to one who is in the waking world. Waking is a *Dirghasvapna* (long dream) as contrasted with ordinary dream which is short.

Waking life is, in one sense, a part of the cosmic consciousness, though in waking this fact is not directly realised due to the ignorance in which one is shrouded. Waking consciousness is the connecting link between the individual and the physical universe. Man reflects over life and is able to use his higher discrimination when he is in the waking condition. In dream, the intellect and the will are incapacitated due to their being clouded by *Avidya*, and so deliberate contemplation becomes impossible there. The individual in the waking state is possessed of intellect and free will, but is destitute of the power of free thinking in dream. Dream is largely the result of impressions of waking life, while waking is seen to be independent of dream and its effects. Further, there is a kind of order or system in the form of waking experience, at least more than in that of dream. Every day the same persons and things become the objects of the waking consciousness; there is a definite remembrance of previous days' experiences and of survival and continuity of personality. The consciousness of this continuity, regularity and unity is relatively absent in

dream. Dream is not well ordered, while waking experience is more systematic.

There are degrees in objective reality. The three main distinguishable degrees are the subjective, the objective and the absolute. Dream is purely subjective. Waking is objective when compared to dream. The Atman is the Absolute. The individual is the subject in comparison with the world which is its object. Both these are on an equal footing as far as their reality is concerned. Though there is an external world in dream also, the value of it is less than that of the world in waking. Though the form of the dream world agrees with that of the waking world, the former is lower in quality than the latter. Space, time, motion and objects, with the distinction of subject and object, are common to both waking and dream. Even the reality they present at the time of their being known is of a similar nature. But the difference lies in the degrees of reality manifested in them. The individual in the waking state feels instinctively that it is in a higher order of truth than in dream.

The argument that is advanced to prove the unreality of the waking world is that it is as much a play of the mind as the dream world. But it is not difficult to observe that the objects in dream are not imaginations of the dream subject, for it is not in any way the cause of or is more real than the dream objects. The subject and objects in dream manifest reality and unreality of the same degree. The dream subject and the dream objects are both constructions of the mind of the waking individual, which synthesises both of them in its unity. In like manner, the waking individual is not to be



considered to be the cause of or to be more real than the objects known by it in the waking state, for all these belong to the same order of reality. None of them can be said to have a greater reality or unreality than the other. The virtues and defects that characterise things in general are to be found in everything that is known in the waking state. The knower and the known in the waking world are both effects of the workings of the cosmic mind which projects and also integrates them in its single comprehension. As the cosmic mind has a greater reality than the individual mind, the waking state is to be regarded as relatively more real than the dream state.

It is true that, as far as the manner of subjective experience is concerned, what is within the mind is often projected on external objects. But the objects themselves are not creations of the subjective mind. There is a difference between *Isvarasrishti* and *Jivasrishti*. The *existence* of the objects belongs to *Isvarasrishti*, while the *relation* that obtains between objects and the knowing subject is *Jivasrishti*. The *Jiva* is one of the contents of *Isvarasrishti*, and so it cannot claim to be the creator of the world, though it is the author of its own psychological modes. The distinction between the creations of *Isvara* and *Jiva* accounts for the difference in quality, though not in structure, between waking and dream. As perception precedes memory and is the cause of memory, waking precedes dream logically and becomes the cause of the impressions that are responsible for the dream-content. Dream is an externalisation of the effects of waking experience. To one who is in the state of *Brahman*, the

waking world is unreal. But to the Jiva, it is a relative fact valid as long as its individuality lasts (*First Lessons in Vedanta: pp. 163-180*).

Every condition may, in the words of the teacher Gaudapada, be said to represent a framework of experience (Sthani-Dharma) related to the position and status of the experiencer in a particular order of consciousness. During dream, the dream world is real, for the subject in dream is placed in a status which is in harmony with the reality of the total framework of the dream world, of which the dream subject forms a part. The question of the unreality of an experience does not arise when the subject gets involved in the total system to which the experience is given. Only when the subject rises to a wider system of consciousness does it realise the existence of a higher order of being. But in the experience of a different realm of being the subject enjoys an altogether different status (Sthani-Dharma) applicable to a different framework of experience. A world of experience is relevant only to a particular frame of reference and is not valid to all orders of reality. The world is another name for experience.

### **The World is Unreal**

Brahman and the world cannot both be real. Otherwise, one would not feel that one is caught in untruth, and the dissatisfaction, want and aspiration characterising everyone cannot be accounted for. There would be no use in the knowledge of Brahman, for the world, then, is equally real and good. None in this world would have desire of any kind, or would endeavour to obtain anything, for we are in

a world that is real, and the real is not in need of any improvement. Nor is there any sense in trying to overcome certain circumstances in the world and desiring to be led to better ones, for the real is eternally unchangeable and perfect in every respect. There would be no imperfection in the world, for the real can lack nothing. But the world is not as we would prefer it to be. It has its seamy side.

Several works of Swami Sivananda, especially his *Jnana-Yoga* (pp. 62-74) and *Practice of Vedanta* (pp. 12-16), abound in various arguments for the unreality of the world, the essential significance of which may be brought out as follows:

Four kinds of objects are seen to exist in this world—objects that have only names; objects that have only names and forms; objects that have names and forms and are also fit for practical activity; reality which exists in all the three periods of time. Examples of the first type of objects are a barren woman's son (Vandhyaputra), the horns of a hare (Sasavishana), a lotus in the sky (Gaganaravinda), and the like. A snake seen in the rope (Rajjusarpa), silver seen in the mother-of-pearl (Suktikarajata), water perceived in a mirage (Mrigatrishna), a city in the clouds (Gandharvanagara), dream objects (Svapnaprapancha), etc., represent objects of the second type. A pot (Ghata), a cloth (Pata), etc., belong to the third type of objects. The Atman or Brahman is the fourth type of existence, which is ultimately real. An object of the first kind is called Asad-Vastu (nonexistent entity), of the second kind Mithya-Vastu (unreal entity), of the third kind Vyavaharika-Vastu (empirical entity), and the being corresponding to the

fourth kind is the Paramarthika-Vastu (supreme substance).

What constitutes a solid object like a stone is a group of atoms revolving round one another. But to the ordinary sight, this collection of particles appears as a concrete static object. In fact, every object is made up of forces constituting these atoms. When a bamboo rubs against another bamboo in a forest, the atoms in them begin to rotate with great speed. Fire is thus generated. Fire is nothing but the revolution of atoms with a tremendous velocity. If a piece of paper is held in a flame, the atoms of the paper which are moving with a lesser speed begin to revolve with a greater velocity. We say, then, that the paper burns. When any portion of the body comes in contact with fire, the atoms in the skin and the subcutaneous tissues begin to rotate with an increasing rapidity. Then we say that the body is burnt. Being always attached to the body, the mind begins to feel pleasure or pain according to the manner in which the atoms in the body begin to revolve. The activity of the mind is tremendously influenced by the condition of the body. The agitated state of the mind is called pain, and its serene state is happiness. Fire, heat, etc. are all different states of the particles that constitute bodies in the universe. Every physical change produces, therefore, a corresponding experience in the physical realm.

The ultimate essences forming physical bodies are not different from aspects of the manifestation of ether. The rudimentary forces out of which physical bodies are made are observed, on careful analysis, to consist of a homogeneous energy which is indistinguishable from the

substance of ether. Earth, water, fire and air can be resolved into the essence of ether. Ether is thus the ultimate stuff of the physical world. But this is not the ultimate reality possible, for space, time and energy, together with ether, have their roots in Brahman. "What we see outside is due to Avidya (ignorance). There is only light outside. There is only vibration. It is the mind that gives colour and shape" (*Mind and Its Mysteries*: p. 71).

Things cannot be said to be what they appear to be. The objects that are perceived outside are not self-existent entities. The things in themselves, or objects as such, cannot become the contents of the human consciousness. The eyes cannot see objects as they are. If the eyes can really see objects, they should be able to see even air and ether, and perceive objects in pitch-darkness. But they are not; and this inability is due to the restriction of the process of seeing to the region of colours. The eyes see only colours and not objects, though these configurations of colours made visible appear as solid substances. This deception is caused by the association of other senses of knowledge in the act of perception. The fingers feel that the table is hard to the touch, and the eyes confirm its existence by perceiving a shape made manifest by colour. The illusion that is involved in the perception of an object is thus the result of a joint conspiracy engaged in by the different senses to make the individual believe in its reality. What actually happens in perception is that the eyes do not see the table, but only the colour with some shape, and the fingers do not really touch the table having any such feature as solidity or hardness, but the forces constituting what

appears as a table bring about an electrical repulsion when the forces constituting what appears as fingers come in contact with them. When the universal energy strikes the retina of the eyes with a particular velocity and modality, it appears as light; when it strikes the eardrum with a different speed and modal appearance it goes by the name of sound; and so on with the perceptions of the other senses.

When colours are perceived by the eyes, they assume an agency in that perception. As the water of a lake that enters an agricultural field assumes a triangular, circular or rectangular form, as the case may be, according to the shape of the plot, so the mind mixes with or enters the organ of sight and assumes the form of the organ which is supposed to reflect the form of the object outside. The ignorant individual takes for granted the reality of the object perceived, while in fact it has felt only certain reactions in consciousness, on account of the interaction of the external forms and the internal ideas. The mind is thus deceived in all its cognitions, wherein it confounds the percepts with what is existent outside. A man with colour-blindness sees green as red and red as blue. One suffering from fever finds no taste in milk. He who has a paralysed tongue cannot feel the taste in an orange or in salt. A microphone exaggerates the sound of the fall of a pin. He who has a cataract in his eyes sees a double moon. A frog, an elephant and an ant have their own different worlds. This world is a play of colours and sounds. A man with a perverted sense of touch feels the sensation of butter in stone. If we have quite a different pair of lenses, we will

have another world. A round table will appear as a square one. The senses are deceiving us at every moment. Time is created by Kala-Sakti, space by Dik-Sakti and form by Rupa-Sakti. All are the products of Maya (*Vide, Lectures on Yoga and Vedanta: p. 244*). "It is only the individual mind that sees objects outside. If we see the same objects through a telescope, they appear different. If we can see with the mind directly, we will have a different vision altogether. Hiranyagarbha or Karya-Brahman has quite a different vision. He sees everything as a vibration or movement within Himself, as His own Sankalpa (willing), just as we can imagine within our own minds that a big war is going on and many people are dying on either side" (*Mind and Its Mysteries: p. 70*).

Whether objects really exist outside or not, the individual percipient has no capacity to know. What one is aware of is a group of sensations, and nothing more. Attributing reality to what are known in sensations, the mind undergoes the experiences of pleasure and pain. The real objects are beyond human knowledge, for they are subtler than the structural essences of the senses. That we see, hear, touch, taste or smell is no argument for the existence of real objects outside, for we do so even in dream. Sensations form certain vibrations in consciousness, from which what we can infer at the utmost is that there should be some cause for their occurrence, but not that we are aware of existent things in certainty. An analysis of sensations and perceptions leads us to the knowledge of a deeper ideality of the world, which gives an entirely different meaning to all our values of life.

It is not, however, true that human experience is throughout invalid, just because it does not present realities. A false fear of a false tiger seen in dream can cause a real rising of the mind to the waking state. The empirical concepts used as working hypotheses in the study and practice of philosophy and religion act as relative instruments in bringing about the rise of real knowledge, though they themselves may not belong to the realm of reality. False diseases do not require real treatment, and the confusion of consciousness that is this solid world of experience needs only a shrewd tuning up of the inner mechanism of knowledge to enable the individual to melt in the ocean of existence.



## **CHAPTER VIII: BRAHMAN**

### **The Story of the Atom**

Commonsense perception makes one believe that the ultimate stuff of the world is matter. The senses give us the intimations of the existence of physical bodies outside our own. We, generally speaking, live in a world presented by the senses, and the senses happen to come in contact only with material bodies, for they are gross even as matter is. In the beginning, human attempt to understand the nature of the world ended in the discovery that some physical element must be the reality. Some thought that water is the primal substance. Certain others felt it is fire, some air, and so on. This is the natural consequence of the most primitive form of perception. Matter was taken to be what it was observed to be. There are the five gross elements, and everything seems to be composed of them. Some ancient speculators, no doubt, felt a need to accept the presence of a mind, in addition to these elements. But its position in the scheme of things was so weak that it was superseded by the feeling that the elements are, somehow, the ultimate realities of the world.

But this state of affairs could not continue for long. Matter became one of the two realities making up the world, the other being mind or thought. Matter is mere extension, it is the material of all bodies, animal and human alike, though the human being has a thinking and understanding faculty, this distinguishing him from the lower animals which are said to be, more or less, automaton moved by instinct. There were also others to whom matter appeared as the symbol of imperfection, the

dark qualityless basis of the world, and could be designated as non-being. Only the mind contemplating it can be real. These thinkers took little interest in the constitution of matter, for, to them, it had little significance in the realm of realities. Matter was also believed to be the potential state of what is more real, the latency of the form, a stage in the process of development. The world of matter was held to be not a static being, but a movement, a march towards the actualisation of pure form. Matter, again, was thought to consist of sleeping centres of energy or force. Minds are such centres risen to consciousness, while matter is their unevolved state. Others felt that matter is an attribute of reality which appears as matter from one viewpoint and as thought from another.

It is interesting to note that present-day science has slowly risen from the perception of solid matter, by a gradual improvement of the instruments of its knowledge. The world which was supposed to be consisting of the gross elements and various kinds of objects was reduced to a few simple chemical elements which were thought to be incapable of further simplification. But these elements were again analysed, and, with Dalton, came the theory that these consisted of minute granular substances or atoms. The number of the atoms was supposed to correspond to that of the chemical elements, of which the former are the constituents. But then came, again, the wonderful researches of a group of eminent pioneers of a revolution in science, which revealed the electrical nature of the atom and the possibility of breaking it into further minute elements. The cause of the difference in the various kinds of

atoms was found to be something startlingly new. The difference was discovered to be not in the quality of the constituents of the atom, but in their number, arrangement and manner of movement. The constituents themselves are identical in nature in all the atoms of the different chemical elements. The atoms are made up of positive and negative charges of electricity, called protons and electrons. Later, several other phases, such as neutrons that have no charges in them, and positrons which are positive electrons, were discovered. The atom is described as something similar to a solar system. The central nucleus of the atom is comparable to the sun, with the electrons revolving round it as the planets. There is an immensity of space between these revolving particles and the central nucleus, as well as between the particles themselves. These electrical constituents of the atom are supposed to be the irreducible minimum reality in the world.

### **From Physics to Metaphysics**

Scientists, however, have not been able to come to the last element in the analysis of matter. They have reached only organisms after organisms and their mysterious functions, and nothing else. Even the nature of these organisms is not known, only their behaviour is observed. One cannot say what electricity is, but only how it behaves. Electric energy is a name given to the farthest process discovered in the world by instruments available to the methods of science. Energy is not *being* but *becoming*, and its activity is the same as its existence. Modern physics has given a quietus to the age-old materialistic theory of the

world, and has landed in the realm of a dynamic process of organisms acting symmetrically on one another. Being has given way to becoming. Science, however, has remained blind to the fact that even a process cannot be, unless it is observed by an intelligence. The highest reality cannot be any object, though it be a cosmic object, like energy, which is distinguished from the consciousness that knows it. The error in the scientist's way of knowing comes into high relief when he faces insurmountable difficulties in his search for reality. To him, electric energy and light appear to have the character of waves as well as of discrete corpuscles. All phenomena are now supposed to be a continuous process of particles. It is not difficult to note that isolated particles cannot form a process. And yet this appears, to the eye of the scientist, to be the juggling activity of the ultimate constituents of matter and light. He forgets that there are certain restricting conditions imposed upon his knowledge by the very nature of the instruments he uses in his researches as well as by the structure of his mind and sense-organs. One cannot know truth by remaining as an observer outside it, for the limitations on individual knowledge are removed only when the distinction between the knower and the known is abolished in a self-identical awareness.

The dilemma in which the scientist is landed by his defective means of knowing becomes clear from another problem raised in science which goes by the name of the Principle of Indeterminacy. This is the outcome of the inability of the scientific method of observation to fix the track of the movement of electrons in an atom. The laws of

mechanics fail here, and the electron does not seem to obey any law known to man. It is seen to make jumps from one point of space to another in a manner that cannot be determined by any scientific law. This predicament has led many to think that there is no freedom in the universe, that there is no choice, and that indeterminacy reigns supreme everywhere. This conclusion is evidently exaggerated, for the principle only means that the ways of tracing the movements of the electron are not known to scientists yet, and that their present instruments of research are not as subtle as the force with which the electrons move. This cannot be taken to amount to a denial of the causal law and the system with which the universe appears to be governed.

The present trend of science has been towards an idealistic monism, affirming finally a mental or spiritual principle as the ultimate stuff of the universe. Newton's physics and Euclid's geometry have given rise to the theory of relativity and the geometry of the four-dimensional manifold. The mechanistic laws of Newtonian physics and the theorems and deductions of Euclid hold good in *our* world, with *our* space-time, but are proclaimed to be inapplicable to the inconceivably small realm of microphysics, as also to the inconceivably great universe envisaged in astrophysics. Modern physics gives, thus, not a material world in the old sense of the term, but a relative structure to be equated, in the end, with the functions of a cosmic mind or consciousness. Behind the man of commonsense perception is the chemist. Behind chemist is physicist. Behind the physicist is the mathematician. Symbols and equations have taken the place of physical

bodies. But these, however, are contained in the mind of the mathematician. And behind the activity of the mathematical mind is the searching analysis of the philosopher.

### **Pluralism and Dualism**

Philosophers have endeavoured to know reality in the most comprehensive way, but have not come to any uniform conclusion in regard to it. There are pluralists, dualists, materialistic monists, idealistic monists and neutral monists. The differences among these theories are attributable to the varying points of view from which speculators tried to comprehend reality. In essence, pluralism forms the beginning of philosophical speculation. It does not require much effort to become a pluralist, for it is a cluster of diversified elements that is naturally presented to man through the senses with their variegated capacities. The Nyaya posits the reality of substances like earth, water, fire, air, ether, space, time, mind and soul—all held to be equally real and coeternal. The God of this system has obviously to be an extra-cosmic creator, or, more strictly, a fashioner, of the structure of the universe. Such a pluralistic theory as this seems to be agreeable to commonsense, for it can be readily accepted without the exercise of much thought. But commonsense is often confined to the manner in which the world is known by the senses, and is blind to the deeper implications of experience. How does the pluralist explain the relation among the different ultimate entities which he has established? It is imperative that a knowledge of diversity

should be rooted in some kind of unity of perception. Plurality is impossible unless there is a witnessing consciousness, different from the pluralistic entities, and connecting them all in a relation of coherence. An extra-cosmic God cannot have any relation to the world, and cannot even fashion it, not even be aware of it. A conscious subject, absolutely independent of its objects, cannot know them, for no relation is possible between differing self-existent principles. All questions ultimately hinge upon the problems of knowledge. The structure of consciousness is the crux of philosophical enquiries. With its understanding, all problems get solved, naturally. A thorough-going pluralist cannot defend himself against the charge that even he could not be aware of a plurality of ultimate entities without the aid of a unitary consciousness comprehending them all. His reality hangs loosely in some indeterminable emptiness, call it space or any other thing. The pluralist tries to dovetail artificially several realities into his system, forgetting, however, that in the act of bringing them together to form a consistent whole, he has unconsciously introduced into it a universal synthesising principle made manifest in his own mind. The great defect in all objectivist approaches is that the subject neglects to count itself as an essential element that goes to determine the character of its concept of reality.

The dualist, no doubt, makes an advance upon the commonsense perception of the pluralist. He observes that all things can be reduced, somehow, to a conscious knower and an unconscious known. The material universe is always the known and never the knower. The knower is always

conscious as distinguished from the known which is unconscious. In the West, dualists like Descartes thought that there are two ultimate realities—thought and extension, mind and matter. In India, dualists like the Sankhya philosophers reduced the universe to Purusha and Prakriti, an infinite knowing consciousness, and an infinite unconscious primordial stuff with a possibility of all things. The habit of the pluralists to pack realities in different parcels was found to be gravely mistaken, and the theory of an ultimate duality of consciousness and matter appeared to be most reasonable and appealing to the human mind. But even those among the dualists who thought that consciousness is infinite held that there is a plurality of consciousness. Evidently, they came to this conclusion by drawing an analogy from the perception of a diversity of knowing subjects in the world. This belief, however, could not carry them far, for the impossibility of asserting many infinities did not take much time to force itself into the minds of more deeply thinking philosophers. Moreover, the relation of consciousness to matter became a problem difficult to solve.

We create a division between the knower and the known, because it suits our practical needs and conveniences. It is the nature of reality to appear in a duality of the seer and the seen when it is made the object of individual perception. The dualist hypothesis would give strong support to the pragmatist theory that the notion of reality is relative to human interest. We are born in a world of duality, and the very fibre of our make-up is saturated with a consciousness of its tremendous significance. We



think in terms of duality, feel and act in accordance with it. It is natural, therefore, that truth, to us, should be relative to our dualistic interests. The pragmatist attitude is the immediate result of our attachment to sense-perception. In its view, what is known is not the real as such, but our purposes objectified. We seem to abstract from the real what we need at the present state of our minds, and identify our needs with reality. We appear to be concerned with the meaning that things have for us in our day-to-day affairs, and not with the things themselves. The pragmatic method consoles us by returning to us our own desires in the form of truth, but not truth in itself. It is true that, for psychology, the subject is sharply distinguished from the object, but philosophy cannot be content with such a superficial attitude to knowledge. Psychology is concerned with mind and its behaviour on a dualistic basis, but it cannot validate the notion that there is a real distinction between the knower and the known, even if our surface-life may seem to demand it. An unquestioning clinging to the immediate sense-percepts is the cause of our blind belief in the ultimate division of things. There cannot be knowledge of truth or a correspondence between knowledge and fact, if the object is outside the jurisdiction of consciousness.

The relation of matter to consciousness can be explained only if an organic intimacy of the one with the other is accepted. A completely detached object cannot become a content of consciousness. The mind cannot know even the existence of matter, if they are ultimately different from each other. There can be relation between two terms only when they possess some qualities, at least, common to

both. Matter and consciousness are, to the dualist, elements which are supposed to possess characters which have no relation of similarity. But, then, the existence of the object cannot become a content of the mind. Man cannot know that there is a world outside, if it is true that he is not a member in its constitution. Knowledge-relation always presupposes a third element which makes the connection between the subject and the object possible. Entities possessing dissimilar natures cannot come in contact with, or even know the presence of, each other. The acceptance of a principle relating the subject and the object in perception, and yet different from them both, takes us to the great truth of a consciousness that cannot be restricted by factors either external or internal. It appears to have an *instantaneous* existence, unconditioned, and at once timeless. When we accept such a principle, we come, perhaps, to the realisation of the highest end of all philosophical quest. Pure consciousness should naturally be omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. It gets identified with the ideal pointed out by the concept of God. God is the infinite. He is neither a knower nor a known, but transcendent being.

### **Towards Monotheism**

In the Vedanta, reality is conceived of in the various degrees of the manifestation of consciousness. However, all concepts of God accept the universality of His existence. The grossest manifestation of God is termed Virat, which is an appellation used to denote the divine consciousness animating the whole physical universe. The physical objects

become the body of Virat, and the relation between the physical universe and Virat is one of body and soul. The cosmic physical body is the aggregate of all individual physical bodies. All states of the waking consciousness are included in Virat. The individual, in its contemplation of Virat, identifies the waking consciousness with it. The subtle universe, which is comparable to the subtle body of the individual, consisting of the vital energy, the senses and the psychological organs, is said to be animated by a subtler and higher consciousness, more pervasive than Virat. This is Hiranyagarbha, Sutratma or Mahaprana, the Soul of the invisible universe. The individual contemplating on it identifies the subtle body with its essence. The subtlest manifestation of the universe, however, is in its causal state, wherein distinctions of creation are not clearly expressed in space and time, but exist in a latent form. This is comparable to the causal body of the individual. The consciousness animating the causal universe is Isvara or the supreme Lord. The individual contemplating on Isvara identifies the causal body with His existence. In this process of self-identification, the individual transcends itself and becomes a cosmic person, as it were, above the trammels and turmoils of empirical life. "Virat, under the orders of Isvara, having entered this microcosmic body, and having the Buddhi (intellect) as His vehicle, reaches the state of Visva. Then He goes by the general names of Vijnanatma, Chidabhasa, Visva, Vyavaharika, as the one presiding over the gross body and one generated by Karma. Sutratma or Hiranyagarbha, under the orders of Isvara, having entered microcosmic subtle body, and having the Manas (mind) as

His vehicle, reaches the Taijasa state. Then He goes by the names of Taijasa, Pratibhasika and Svapnakalpita. Then, Isvara, assuming His Power as Avyakta, the vehicle of Maya, having entered the microcosmic causal body, reaches the state of Prajna. He goes, then, by the names of Prajna, Avichhinna and Sushupti-Abhimani” (*Jnana-Yoga: p. 116*). “Vaisvanara is one with Virat on the physical plane. Taijasa is one with Hiranyagarbha on the astral or the subtle plane. Prajna is one with Isvara on the causal plane” (*Principal Upanishads: Vol. I, p. 423*). Unrelated to the universe in all the three manifestations of it, is Brahman.

The admission of an ultimate reality of a universal nature has appeared in different phases and forms in different philosophies. To the Nyaya philosophers, the omniscient God is not omnipresent, for He is extra-cosmic. Naturally, He cannot be omnipotent, too. God becomes, in the hands of the Naiyayikas and Vaisheshikas, a mechanical device invented to ward off the charge of atheism on their schools, but having no intrinsic significance in it. The same is the case with the God of Yoga. He is neither the creator of the universe nor the goal of the aspirations of the individual. He hangs loosely in the scheme worked out by this system. The introduction of such a God does not alter the position of Yoga from that of the non-theistic Sankhya. To the theistic Vedanta schools, the world is as much real as God. But they do not care to reflect on the impossibility of perfection on the part of God when there is an externally existing matter contending with Him as His rival. We cannot have two eternals, nor two infinities. If the world is eternal, God is not; and if God is eternal, the world cannot

be so. If, at all, there is any such thing as perfection, it should be in a secondless Absolute, and such a one cannot be if there are real souls and a real world clamouring for being real, each in its own place.

The Idea of the Good contemplated by Plato is either to be understood in the sense of the Absolute of the Advaita or, if we accept Aristotle's interpretation of Plato's idealism as positing two realities—a temporal world and an intelligible order of eternal Ideas—Plato's Idea becomes analogous to the God of dualistic theism. The God of Descartes and, perhaps, even that of Hegel, is in no better plight. Spinoza makes thought and extension the necessary attributes of God and thus seems to take space, time and mental activity to God Himself. God ought to be non-spatial and non-temporal, and His thought cannot be an activity but luminous intelligence. Plotinus among Western mystics, and Bradley among Western philosophers, approximate to the Advaita-Vedanta. But Plotinus hesitates, at times, to merge the individual in God, though his inclination seems to be to do so. The defect of Bradley is that he makes the Absolute a system of relations. It is not indivisible and so loses the character of eternality. Whoever asserts the ultimate reality of the world has to limit his God to that extent. When the world is interpreted in terms of God, we have no God *and* world, but God *as* world. Even here, an independent reality is not ascribed to names and forms; only their essential existence is identified with God's being.

## **The Underlying Essence**

An analysis of the nature of the world discloses its dependence on a reality higher than its own. It is subject to a teleological direction of its movements towards an end beyond itself. Dissatisfaction with the superficial experiences which one has in life is a tacit admission of a higher standard of reality. As Bradley puts it: "To think is to judge, and to judge is to criticize, and to criticize is to use a criterion of reality." Acharya Sankara holds that, when we deny something as inadequate, we do so with reference to some norm which is adequate. Every want, every wish and ambition, every type of wonder, surprise or mystery, every sense of a 'beyond oneself' suggests the existence of something outside the limitations which it indicates. 'Something is wanting' means that what is wanted exists. That we are miserable shows that there is an ideal of happiness. The consciousness of imperfection implies the possibility of perfection. To recognise the finitude of oneself is to step at once into the realm of the infinite. When finitude is known, the fact of the contingency of the knower's transcending it is implied in it. The finite has no significance except in contradistinction to the infinite. The moral argument based on the aspirations of man points to a reality in which they can be fulfilled. There is an urge in everyone to break the boundaries of imperfection and reach out to an unlimited existence, wherein is a promise of the satisfaction of all the sides of one's nature. Man is never contented with anything that he possesses, for he feels, in spite of his possessions, an inherent sense of a serious lack of something which does not seem to be included in

anything that he is blessed with in this world. Even the rulership over all things will leave behind a want of something higher and a yearning to obtain one knows not what. There is a longing for eternal life, for boundless knowledge, for unrestricted happiness, for light, freedom and immortality. This restless aspiration refuses to be cajoled by the poor presentation of earthly glory. The world seems to be busy, changing and moving, adjusting and adapting itself to conditions beyond itself, pointing to the weird vision of some wondrous essence at which it is aiming as its long desired destination. Union and separation, birth and death, struggle and aspiration, do not have any significance unless they imply a being which is beyond change and transformation. The contingent character of things seems to oppose one state of finitude to another, suggesting a self-expansion of the finite in an experience wider than its own, in which it includes the properties of the other finites, and by which it overcomes the lower oppositions in a higher harmony. Every perception is an ardent effort to attain a greater unity, in which the essences of all percepts are transmuted and absorbed. All created elements tend to find their solace in a fulfilment of their nature by an attempt to overcome all cramping situations that stand in the way of such development. The relational character of finite objects is determined by the action of other finite objects on them, which fact leads us to the discovery of the universe being an organism presided over by a supreme Intelligence. The existence of the finite as the finite is dependent on the conditions determining finitude as a whole, and so it has to

rise from its lower conditioned state to more and more inclusive ones which reveal greater and greater coherence and harmony. Our life in the world can be accounted for only by the existence of the Absolute.

“Life is of two kinds—life in matter and life in the Atman, Spirit or Pure Consciousness. Biologists, physiologists and psychologists hold that life consists of thinking, feeling, knowing, willing, digestion, excretion, circulation, respiration, etc. This kind of life is not everlasting” (*Sure Ways for Success in Life*: p. xxxvii). The scientists’ view of the universe is not without the grave defects common to sense-perception in general. “After commonsense has attained sufficient growth, scientific reason or scientific understanding awakes in a thinking few. The world, which appeared to commonsense as a series of events coming one after another without any essential connection among themselves, now comes to be regarded as a constant series of different phenomena linked together by the law of causation. Nothing is free; everything is bound up in necessity. Give the necessary causes, the desired effect will follow. Scientists hold that the human mind cannot go beyond these phenomena and their unifying laws. What is the noumenon, the life-giving principle of those laws, is a point where the scientific understanding halts. Anything beyond these fleeting shows is *terra incognita*. Viveka, or the philosophical sense, then comes to the rescue of the scientific despair consequent upon the thinking ego being tied down to the shackles of necessity. The reflecting ego, the subject, has an inner conviction that it is free, although it moves in a circle of



external objects bound, as it were, by the law of necessity. The want of freedom under which it seems to labour is imposed upon it by an external principle called mind, which, as a rule, makes no discrimination between the subject and the object. The philosophical sense or reason tries to investigate the principle of unity, which is the point of reference of all different existences, and which transcends the apparent diversity of things. All differences derive their meaning, their very existence, from the truth of the identity of the subject and the object which have been held as antagonistic principles” (*Practice of Yoga: pp. 105-6*).

“The sages, the great seers, have been again and again declaring from direct experience that the perishable is not the real, and that the real is the unseen. The aim of life here does not lie here itself, the goal is not to be sought in the means, the ideal is different from the process. The individual’s existence on earth is not a true existence, but only a process of becoming, now and again, something else. No one here can say that he is a real being, for being is what does not change or die, whereas everyone experiences such violent and constant changes in himself that he cannot but feel that he dies to himself incessantly. Hence, one has to realise the transient character of one’s phenomenal existence as an entity separated from the life of the universe. The world is the field of training for eternal life, the purgatory for the sin-hardened individual, the deserter of truth, the killer of the self, the wanderer among phantasms. Worldly life is not perfection, even as hell is not heaven, purgatory is not salvation. The world and the body

are ladders and steps to the lofty realisation of God Who is called the Self, Atman, Brahman, etc.” (*Light Divine: p. xii*). “The world of time in which one lives is the visible face of the timeless Light of the invisible Glory that throbs at the heart of all things. The unrest and struggle of human life dimly foreshadow the feeble response which man makes to the call of the higher Life. The call is eternal, and the intensity and quality of the response to it from man’s side depend on the depth of his awareness of the fact that his state is one of a severe want which cannot be fulfilled completely by anything on earth. The welfare of society, of the different nations, is directly proportional to the extent in which the laws regulating the same accord with this deeper spiritual presence in man, which refuses to be ignored in the daily affairs of his life. When man knows that the light which glimmers within him is the light which descends from above him, he becomes fit for abundance and joy in all directions. His conceit gets melted in the willing surrender of the self to the Divine” (*The Divine Life: Vol. XVIII, p. 363*).

“The Atman alone exists. It appears as the objects which we cognise, just as a rope appears as a serpent. The Atman puts on the appearance of these phenomenal objects. That is Brahman which is the Self of all beings. That Brahman is without cause and without effect, without anything inside or outside, without defect or impurity, without length and breadth, without colour, shape or form. That Brahman is without limbs, parts, name or caste, without hands and legs. That Brahman is an embodiment of wisdom, peace and bliss. It shines by itself. It is self-luminous. All the objects

that you cognise outside really exist in the highest Self. All objects shine after It, i.e., they borrow their light from the self-effulgent Atman. The whole world exists within Brahman. It appears as external through the force of Maya, just as your body appears in a mirror.” “An infinite Vastu (substance) must be Nirakara (formless) and Vyapaka (all-pervading). It must be beyond time, space and causation. It must be unchanging and beginningless. It must be causeless, too. A thing that is beyond time, space and causation must be immortal. This infinite Vastu (substance), having no sound, etc., does not decay or suffer diminution. Therefore, it is eternal, for what decays is ephemeral.” What is an effect is not eternal but is absorbed into its cause, as earth, etc. But this Being, the cause of all, is not an effect; and not being an effect, it is eternal. It has no cause into which it could be absorbed. It is endless; therefore, it is eternal” (*Philosophy and Teachings: pp. 28, 36*).

### **Impossibility of the Dualist Hypothesis**

“The world is a stage where is enacted a grand play of the twin principles of consciousness and force. The world is a manifestation of Sakti, the Power of the Eternal, whose being is consciousness. It is Chit-Sakti (Consciousness-Force) that displays itself as this majestic reality of the universe. Para-Sakti (Supreme Power) moves everywhere as Brahma-Sakti (Creative Power), Vishnu-Sakti (Preservative Power) and Siva-Sakti (Transforming Power). Reason and intuition establish the truth of the existence of the Divya-Prakriti that sustains and works this vast panorama of

experiential contents. Matter is reducible to energy. The Prasnopanishad says that Rayi and Prana, matter and energy, constitute the whole of creation. Matter is the outward index of the inner Power that is expressed by God. The Power that originates and sustains the universe is not Jada-Sakti or the electrical energy which is the reality of the scientists, but Chaitanya-Sakti, the Power of the immutable consciousness of Brahman. In fact, it is not a power which is of Brahman, but a Power which is Brahman" (*The Divine Life: vol. XVIII, p. 349*). The play of creation is not external to Reality. "The world does not exist apart from Brahman. Isvara, Jiva and the world are three different aspects of Brahman" (*Practice of Yoga, p. 19*). The entire visible mass is the supra-essential essence of Brahman appearing in that form. "Isvara is not something separate from the world. Sankara has refuted the theory of the Naiyayikas who admit an extra-cosmic creator." "Isvara does not exert from outside to create the worlds. He does not want any instruments or materials to work with, as a potter requires them to make a pot. He is omnipotent. He wills, and everything comes into being. He is the internal ruler. He resides or dwells within all beings and controls everything. He is the material cause as well as the instrumental and efficient cause" (*Principal Upanishads, Vol. I, pp. 431-32*).

"The universe, then, is the visible representation of the highest Ideal of human realisation. In both its lower and higher aspects, Prakriti presents itself as the moving body of the Lord. The Srimad Bhagavata admonishes man to the effect that each and every visible thing in the universe is an object of adoration and worship, for God resides in the

temple of all things. The worship of God means at once an adjustment of oneself with the super-individual law of the universe. There cannot be spiritual devotion and worship without an inward adaptation of consciousness to the scheme of the universe, which is God envisaged in the framework of space and time. The God outside and above is the same as the God within and below. The Upasana (worship) of the highest Deity has to be in terms of the supreme Sakti that is the eternal Mother of all beings" (*The Divine Life, Vol. XVIII, p. 349*). The dualism of the Sankhya and other empiricist schools is, therefore, not tenable. The human mind is dissatisfied as much with the theory of an ultimate duality of things as with the dogma of the chances of an eternal damnation of certain creatures. Swami Sivananda teaches the wholesome doctrine of the unity of creation. "There is a coconut made of sugar only. It has marks, lines, an external shell, ridges, eyes, and everything. But you have the internal feeling in the mind that it is only sugar. Similarly, though you see the different objects of the universe, you must have a feeling and determination of the Atman that is at the bottom of all these objects, which is the ultimate reality and essence of everything." "Why do you look into the leaves, twigs, flowers and fruits of the mango tree? Look into the source, the seed. The cloth is only cotton and thread. Take the cloth as cotton only. Take the world as Atman or Brahman" (*Mind and Its Mysteries, p. 352*). "When you see a mango tree, it is external to you. There is externality. The mango tree is a mental percept. It is a mental concept, also. There is no mango tree apart from the mind. There is a mental image in the mind. The image

in the mind, plus an external *something* is the mango tree. Even if you close your eyes, you can get at the image through memory. The green colour of the leaves is due to a certain rate of light vibrations. These light vibrations strike at the retina and are taken to the vision-centre at the back of the brain. The mango leaves have the power to split the white rays and absorb the green colour only. So says science. Your body, also, is as much external to you as the yonder mango tree. It is also a mental percept or concept. The mango tree is external to you with reference to your body. The mango tree itself is a mere appearance that floats in the Absolute, the one Reality. As the mango tree is external to you from the standpoint of your body, and as the body itself is external to you, the idea of the externality of the mango tree, or even this external universe, is blown up. The term 'internality', also, has only a false existence. There is internality only with reference to externality. If externality goes away, where is internality? Both the terms, internality and externality, are mere illusions, creations of the mind. There is only the solid existence, the one reality, the Absolute, behind the so-called internality and externality" (*Ibid*, pp. 253-54).

Duality is the repository of change. If change is an appearance, what is behind it must be reality. *General existence* is common to all objects. The meaning of a quality is in the form of the substance in which it inheres, and the being of the form is in the reality of which it is an appearance. All substances in the world, being made up of the five great elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—which are subject to change, can be reduced to their cause

which does not change. The world constituted of these elements is an expression of the manifesting energy of Brahman, and is ultimately non-different from it. The existence of the world of objects is in the changeless power of Brahman. The nature of this existence is revealed in the innermost recesses of our being. We observe by outward and inward analysis that the irreducible minimum of existence, which underlies the perception of the world of matter, motion and change, is a consciousness which is aware of all these as not belonging to its essence. The highest existence is that of pure consciousness, a consciousness that does not admit of division or separation of any kind. As the link that brings about a relation between objects outside and mental states inside, it is the sum of all their signification. All division has a divisionless substance behind it, the notion of separation is based on a unity underlying it, and the fear of death proves the immortality of the soul. Life in outright duality is inconceivable.

### **Consciousness is Above Relation**

The world is known to exist by an interaction of the knower and the known in a relation of knowledge. The self is the subject set in opposition to the object or the not-self. The subject, in the very recognition of itself as an isolated existence, implies an object outside it. There is no meaning in subjectness without an object that it can know. Likewise, the supposition of the existence of the object implies a subject by which it is known. There is a mutual determination of the two in an act of knowledge. The self knows itself as an individual existence by a knowledge

which is also aware of an object outside it. The knowledge-relation, therefore, is what establishes and gives value to the interdependent existence of the subject and the object. We have to assume that knowledge is prior to the notion of the knower and the known, for the distinction which obtains between these two has no significance outside the knowledge-situation underlying and determining them both. The internal meaning manifested in the experience of a subject bears a simultaneous relation to an external meaning that has its significance in a spatial object. The mutual reference of the two terms in the relation of consciousness can be possible only if consciousness is not merely an external relation between them, but a principle that includes and transcends them at once. What we call the knower and the known seem to be merely two poles bound and held together by a consciousness which is neither of these. It is consciousness that gives the value of existence to the subject, and also makes the awareness of the object possible. There seems to be, then, a common current flowing beneath both the knower and the known, relating all things together in a single comprehension. It is the knower, not merely of the object, but even the subject, for both the subject and the object are external to pure consciousness. Consciousness which knows things in space and time and in a relation must be beyond space, time and relation. As it transcends space, it must be infinite; and as it oversteps time, it must be eternal. Space, time, causation, relation, are all values that are objects of consciousness and incapable of identification with it. This Consciousness is Brahman, on account of whose existence others exist, by



whose light others shine, and by whose freedom others are in joy.

“This entire universe is pervaded by Brahman. All beings have their roots in it, but it is not rooted in them. This is the sovereign Yoga. Gold is in the earrings, bracelets, etc., but the earrings etc. are not in gold... Brahman is the Adhara or Adhithana (support) for all beings” (*Light Divine*, p. 5). But, if Brahman is universal existence, how can it be reached or attained by any one? “It may be argued that Brahman is present in all, it is omnipresent and omniscient, it is the Atman in all; so it is not one to be reached. We generally speak of one thing being reached by another, one limited object by another limited object. As Brahman is limitless, as it is the Atman, or the Self of all, it is not proper to speak of an attainment of it, as if it were limited and distinct from one’s own self. Attainment is always associated with duality, with limitations of time, space, etc. But there is no inconsistency here. How? Because the attainment or non-attainment of Brahman depends on the perception or non-perception of it. The Jiva or the individual soul is really one with Brahman.” “That is infinite which is not limited by anything else, which cannot be divided from anything else. If Brahman were the knower, it would be marked off from what is known, and from the act of knowing, from knowledge and the knowable, and could not, therefore, be infinite. As the Sruti says: ‘Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, and knows nothing else (but the Self), that is the Infinite (Bhuma); but where one sees anything else, hears anything else, and knows anything else, that is

the finite.” “One sees an object only when it exists distinct from oneself. The Bhuma or the Infinite is that where no object exists.” “If it is said that the Self can be both the knower and the knowable, we say it cannot be, because it is indivisible; for, as devoid of parts, the one Self cannot be both the knower and the knowable or the known simultaneously” (*Principal Upanishads, Vol. II, pp. 66, 71, 72*). If Brahman be the knower alone, it cannot be pure existence. But pure existence alone can be real, for it is the only unchanging principle. Hence Brahman is beyond all relation.

### **Brahman is Existence and Consciousness**

All things exist. We cannot conceive of non-existence as different from existence, for even non-existence, in order that it may convey any sense, must become a content of consciousness. And consciousness must *be*. Existence is the minimum to which things can be reduced, without which even thought is impossible. Everything relates to existence of some kind, and there is no thought of non-existence.

To argue along the lines of Parmenides, existence is that which does not admit of any change. We cannot think what is not, for what is not cannot come into being, either from what is or from what is not. If what is comes from what is, we would be stating something which we ourselves do not understand, for what is includes all things, and there is no such thing as the production of what is from what is. What is, again, cannot come from what is not, for what is not has no meaningful value. To posit the relation of what is to what is by way of causation involves a tautology, and to

conceive of the coming into being of what is from what is not, is absurd. There cannot be something other than what is, for what is, is the all. Even supposing that there is such a thing as the coming into being of one thing from another thing, we would have to admit that nothing other than what is can come into being, for we cannot add anything to what is, and anything added must itself be a part of what is. There cannot be anything exceeding what is, and what is not, again, cannot come into being. That which is cannot increase, and cannot also decrease, for it is always. If something is to be removed from what is, so that the latter may be lessened, what is removed should be either what is or what is not. What is cannot be removed from what is, and what is not cannot, again, be removed from what is, for it means nothing at all. The concept of dimension, again, is possible only when there is spatial separation of one thing from another. But even space is included in what is. So what is cannot be diminished in any way. And it cannot be increased, because we cannot add anything to it other than itself. Existence is the whole reality. It does not admit of either addition or subtraction, production or change of any kind. In order that it may move or change, there should be space; but space is not outside it. True being has no origination, no change, and so no end. This being must be equally present everywhere, with no less or more of it anywhere. It is that which is. As being is indivisible, it cannot conceive of a real distinction of things in it. All things are being. If there are things other than being, they must be non-being. Even becoming has meaning only when it has being. If being is to be divided, we may have to

introduce some other distinguishable and distinguishing element in it, which would be nothing but non-being. Being is reality.

The Upanishad speaks of Brahman as that which is full, from which the full proceeds, and which remains full even when the full is removed from it. Swami Sivananda, while commenting on this Mantra, in his *Dialogues from the Upanishads*, points out that the infinite, invisible Brahman is That which is full, and the visible Hiranyagarbha or the manifested Brahman, or Brahman as this perceptible universe, is this which is full. From That unmanifest does proceed this manifest or the visible. When the whole universe, with Hiranyagarbha, is absorbed into the whole Brahman, the whole Brahman alone remains as unchanging existence.

It is impossible that such Brahman should not exist. "Why should there be any suspicion at all of the non-existence of Brahman? We reply: It arises from the fact that Brahman is beyond sense-experience, beyond human speech. One has belief in the existence of that which falls within the range of speech. It is right, therefore, to believe that what is beyond the reach of speech is non-existent. People understand that a pot exists when it is within the range of speech. Similarly, here, one may believe that Brahman does not exist." "Because that which exists, such as a pot, is seen in actual experience, and that which does not exist, such as the horn of a hare, is not seen. Similarly Brahman also is not seen. As Brahman is not seen in actual experience, it does not exist. This argument is unsound and untenable, because Brahman is the cause of ether, etc. It

cannot be said that Brahman does not exist, for ether, etc., of which the cause is Brahman, are perceived by the senses.” “We do not perceive in this world, by our senses, anything born out of nothing. If the objects of this world be the products of nothing, they could not be perceived by the senses. But they are perceived, as such. Therefore, Brahman exists. The Sruti declares: ‘How can existence be born of non-existence?’” (*Principal Upanishads, Vol. II, pp. 106-108*).

Now, this existence must be identical with consciousness; else there would not be even existence, considering the infinitude of consciousness. All existence is consciousness, and all consciousness is existence. If consciousness were different from existence, it would be non-existent, which would be the negation of consciousness itself. If existence is different from consciousness, then, again, consciousness would be non-existent. Further, the very value of existence would thereby be cancelled, due to the impossibility of the admission of anything as existing devoid of any relation to consciousness. Referring to our own selves we find that we can never separate our consciousness from our existence, or our existence from our consciousness. The moment we think, we know we are, and to grant that we are is to imply that we know we are. That the world is, means that it is known, and its knowledge, again, should be what exists. Existence and consciousness do not determine each other, but mean one and the same thing. The two must be inseparable in order that either of them may be possible. The existence of the object as well as of the subject is what

is known immediately to consciousness. An external object may be capable of an empirical distinction from the subject that knows it, but pure existence which is common to both is apprehended by a general consciousness. Pure existence is the highest of universals, it comprehends all the generals known to us, and its essence cannot be distinguished from the universal consciousness. This consciousness cannot even be called self-consciousness, for the latter suggests empirical existence limited to space and opposed to an object outside. Absolute existence is absolute consciousness. This is Brahman.

Brahman-consciousness has no internal or external change, for change has a significance in relation to a witness of change. Change involves different conditions in a series or succession of what we call events. This succession of distinctions has no validity except on the acceptance of a consciousness that observes the distinctions but does not itself get involved in them. Change itself cannot be real, nor can the elements constituting change go anywhere near reality. Change is external to consciousness, for, if it were a part of the constitution of consciousness, it could not be known even as a possibility. Change is a condition of something that does not change. That the world changes and evolves, that there is succession, extension, modification, union and separation, is known to a consciousness which is none of these, and which is different from the very idea of relation. Consciousness never becomes an object. It is universal. "Brahman is not an object of knowledge. It has no relation of any kind. It is not nothing, but is everything. It cannot come within the limits

of mind and thinking. If it comes, it becomes a finite object” (*Light Divine*, p. 6). “Of everything that may become an object of knowledge, a perfect or definite knowledge is possible; but not so of a thing which cannot become such an object. This is Brahman, for it is the knower. And the knower may well know the other things, but not make himself the object of his knowledge... The ‘*I who knows*’ can never become an object; for, having become an object, it ceases to have the nature of the subject. Fire can burn other things but not itself. Nor can it be said that Brahman may be made the object of the knowledge of another; for, besides it, none that knows exists” (*Principal Upanishads*, Vol. I, p. 49). “If it is further said that the nature of everything is that by which it is defined, we say Brahman is especially defined by consciousness, which does neither refer to the external senses, nor to the internal sense, but merely refers to Brahman. Therefore, Brahman is consciousness. There is no knower other than that” (*Philosophy and Teachings*, p. 19).

The individual subject is entangled in the changing phenomena of the world, and so empirical knowledge is not to be identified with Brahman. If the consciousness that underlies the world were merely the individual’s knowledge, there would be no world of common perception, no harmony or unity among the contents of the world, and the world would be seriously affected by the appearance or disappearance of a particular individual. Inter-subjective relation and trans-subjective reality would become a chimera on the supposition that individualistic knowledge is the support of the world. The absolute

consciousness expresses itself through individual minds and also appears as objects outside. Metaphysically speaking, even the individual subject has to be classed among temporal objects, behind and beyond which there is Brahman. The world is an appearance in infinite being.

### **The World is Inseparable from Consciousness**

To the outward vision a so-called inanimate object like a stone may appear to be dead and unconscious. But, really, nothing can be said to be dead and motionless in this universe. Even the condition of the apparent motionlessness of a thing is one of intense motion within it. Modern physical science tells us that an object cannot exist without being in a certain state of motion; the mass and the inertia of an object are due to a special type of motion in it. There is no impenetrable hard matter anywhere, everything is vibrant force, motion and power. The so-called stability of a thing is an illusion. There is no static world of localised physical entities; there is only a universe of force, where each individual enters into the constitution of the other and determines its existence and nature. The world is not a visible object. Its visibility is one of its partial conditions coming in contact with the consciousness manifested in our minds. The world is what we know in a particular space-time situation. Knowledge cannot come in contact with what is not of its nature, for knowledge of anything requires that there should be a relation of equality between knowledge and its object. Either there ought to be knowledge of what is essentially of the nature of knowledge alone, or there is no knowledge at all. Knowledge is



consciousness with a content. A knowledge of objects would not be possible, had they been totally alien to the character of consciousness. Knowledge of the world, then, discloses the essentially intelligent nature of the world. Our environment is not material or physical but spiritual. It is in this sense that the world is said to be a content in the Mind of the Cosmic Being. Mac-Taggart is of the opinion that we have no reason to suppose that matter exists at all, and that to talk of matter existing without consciousness is absurd. Matter, in his view, does not partake of any reality belonging to itself. The world cannot be real if it is not real to any knowing subject. And all individual knowing consists of either sensations or a synthesised product of sensations. The existence of the world is said to be an inference from our consciousness of events that take place in the form of experiences that are given to us. Our sensations and experiences are, however, what are valid to us all, created beings, collectively.

Swami Sivananda holds a thorough-going spiritual view of life "This universe is nothing but a mode of the mind, self-evolved from Brahman, the Cause of the universe. Hence, this world is nothing but consciousness itself." "This perishable universe exists only when the mind exists, but disappears with the absence of the latter." "Like a dream generating another dream in it, the mind, having no visible form, will generate non-existent visibles. With the growth of a paltry Sankalpa, there will arise the universe." "This universe is no other than the mind itself. What we call the world is the mind only. The Self-light of the Para-Brahman alone is appearing as the mind and this motley universe."

“The mind is subjectively consciousness and objectively this universe.” “All the universes with their heterogeneity, though they are really Atma-Jnana, shine as worlds only through our illusory minds, like the blueness of the sky, which is really non-existent” (*Mind and Its Mysteries*, pp. 89, 209-12). But this is not to say that the world is within any individual’s head. “The non-existence of the world or its destruction does not mean the annihilation of mountains, lakes, trees and rivers. When your determination that this world is unreal gets stronger and stronger, and when you are well-established in this idea—this alone is destruction of the world” (*Ibid* p. 210). The negation of the world in Consciousness has a universal connotation. No other word brings out this sense so comprehensively as ‘Brahman,’ which is the appellation of the highest Reality.

### **Brahman is Bliss**

There is no limiting adjunct in Brahman, and so no want. Brahman is, therefore, supreme bliss. This bliss is the most positive of facts, not merely a negation of pain. The bliss of Brahman is not the result of the contact of the mind with an object, but the infinite revelation of the freedom and perfection in which desires, ambitions and aspirations are finally fulfilled. The fulfilment is attained not in endless possession, but in absolute being. Freedom is bliss, and the freedom of Brahman follows from the nature of its existence and consciousness. The Taittiriya Upanishad declares that from Ananda do all beings come, having come from Ananda they live in Ananda, and in the end return to

Ananda, and become one with it. The bliss of Brahman is not an emotional satisfaction or a psychological happiness, but the highest metaphysical reality and the supreme spiritual goal. It is pure spiritual experience in which thought overcomes itself. It is the Bhuma, the plenum of felicity, beyond which there is nothing. This spiritual plenitude is defined as that in which one sees nothing else, hears nothing else and understands nothing else, in which one rests in oneself, in one's own greatness, in non-relational being. The Ananda of Brahman is not acquired by an act of knowledge or a relation of subject and object, but is realised by and in itself alone. What is acquired by an act or a process has a beginning and an end, and being perishable, it cannot be identified with eternally accomplished reality. Brahmananda is the direct realisation of the illimitable oneness of existence, consciousness and freedom. This glory is not manifest in the world of space and time—all earthly grandeur and joy palls when a drop of this bliss is tasted. On a part of a reflection of this bliss through a mental mode do all beings in this world subsist, and their highest raptures and ravishing delights are but poor intimations of that supernal beatitude.

Commenting on the statement of the Taittiriya Upanishad that 'Rasa (essence), indeed, is That', Swami Sivananda remarks: "Love for Brahman cannot arise if it were not of the nature of bliss. Therefore, the word Rasa denotes that Brahman is bliss itself. All sensual pleasures are only a reflection of that one supreme bliss of Brahman. The wise Brahmanas who are devotees of Brahman, who have no external help to joy, who have no desires, who have

attained knowledge, are found full of happiness, as if they had obtained the external objects of pleasure. To them, Brahman alone is Rasa (Joy).” “Brahman gives joy to the world. It makes all beings in the world happy, according to their merit or virtue (Dharma). Brahman is the bliss which is revealed only in its limited forms to living beings on account of their Avidya or ignorance” (*Principal Upanishads, Vol. II, pp. 120-22*). Confirming the view of Chitsukhacharya, Swami Sivananda observes: “All kinds of human activity are directed towards only one end, viz., attainment of happiness. Now, happiness is the essential nature of the Self, which is hidden by pain, the result of nescience. The absence of pain, which follows the destruction of ignorance, means the absence of that which prevents the manifestation of happiness, which forms the essence of the Self. Thus the absence of pain is coveted in so far as it leads to the manifestation of bliss. In other words, the absence of misery is subordinate to happiness, because it is desired not for itself but for the realisation of happiness.” “It should not be supposed, however, that the Vedanta sets the pleasures of the senses, either lawful or unlawful, as the chief end of human life. For it condemns even intellectual pleasures, which are finer than those of the senses, when compared with the immeasurable bliss of the Self.” “The Upanishads teem with the idea that the highest phenomenal pleasures realisable in the world of Brahma (the creator) are mere drops when compared with the ocean of Self-bliss, in which a realised soul fearlessly swims. It is with the view of raising the ideal of happiness that the Vedanta lays so much stress on the moral culture of the

aspirants. The bliss of the Self is noumenal and has no bounds” (*Practice of Yoga, Vol. I, pp. 15-17*).

The existence (Sat), consciousness (Chit) and bliss (Ananda) of Brahman are all one indivisible essence, and not three qualities or properties of Brahman. Existence in its generality does not belong to any particular object, but is the common base of all, and is infinite. And we have seen that existence cannot be dissociated from consciousness, it can be known only when it becomes identical with consciousness. Now, this existence-consciousness, being inclusive of everything, is, naturally, free from all desires. As pain is the effect of a desire felt in consciousness, Brahman which is existence-consciousness must be bliss in its nature. Consciousness which is bliss is existence. “Sat, Chit and Ananda are one. The Atman is partless and homogeneous. The three characteristics— Sat, Chit and Ananda—are not distinct from one another. A tree can be differentiated into branches, flowers, twigs, etc., for they are finite things limited to particular parts of the tree. But the Atman has no parts. ‘Sat’ is present wherever there is ‘Chit’ and ‘Ananda’. ‘Sat’ cannot be limited by another ‘Sat,’ for there are no two ‘Sats,’ nor by ‘Asat,’ for ‘Asat’ cannot exist. If it is said that ‘Chit’ is different from ‘Sat,’ then it will be ‘Asat,’ like the horn of a hare.” “‘Sat’ is ‘Chit.’ ‘Sat’ is ‘Ananda’ also” (*Jnana Yoga, p. 145*). “In the phenomenal universe, we find Asat (the non-existent), Jada (the unconscious) and Duhkha (pain). It is to differentiate these three negative attributes of the Anatman (not-self) that three positive attributes (or concepts) are introduced in the Atman. ‘Sat’ is ‘Chit.’ ‘Chit’ is ‘Sat,’ ‘Chit’ is ‘Ananda.’ ‘Sat’

is 'Ananda.' That which is 'Chit,' alone, can be 'Sat,' that which exists at all times—in the past, present and the future—and which has no beginning or end" (*Practice of Yoga, Vol. I, p. 14*).

### **Brahman is Not the Unknowable**

Brahman is not an unknowable something, as the agnostics would hold. The truly unknowable cannot become even an object of imagination. "Brahman is consciousness. We admit that this is true; yet, thereby, no exact idea of Brahman is obtained. For what we understand by consciousness, knowledge, etc. is only accessible to us by means of the sense of intellect, and expresses, therefore, not knowledge as it is in itself, but as it is reflected by some medium. It is, therefore, true that it is different from what is known; it is also beyond what is not known." "Brahman is not the unknown and unknowable of the agnostics, though it is said that Brahman is incomprehensible. Brahman cannot be known or seen, for it is beyond the reach of the mind, the intellect and the senses. It is more than the known, as it is realised as one's own Atman or the Self. Brahman is always the silent, witnessing consciousness. It is the subject, knower and seer. Anything perceived by the senses and conceived by the mind cannot be Brahman. An object of the world can be perceived by the senses, and thought by the mind. The seer can never be seen. The knower can never be known. Brahman is unknowable in the objective sense; it is unknowable to the mind, the intellect and the senses. It is certainly knowable through direct intuitive perception" (*Principal Upanishads, Vol. I,*

pp. 50, 53). "It (the Atman) is incomprehensible. This does not mean that it is a nonentity, a void, a negative concept or a metaphysical abstraction. It is a mass of knowledge or pure consciousness. Consciousness is denser than stone or platinum or gold. It is the only real living entity, the substratum for everything" (*Jnana Yoga*, p. 83).

The recognition of the unknowability of a being whose existence has somehow to be admitted as an inference from the nature of our own experience implies its knowability. Strictly speaking, the absolutely unknowable is a fiction, for it cannot be thought of and so cannot even be held to be the unknowable. The following statements of Herbert Spencer in his *First Principles* are pertinent: "Besides that definite consciousness, of which logic formulates the laws, there is also an indefinite consciousness which cannot be formulated. Besides complete thoughts, and besides the thoughts which, though incomplete, admit of completion, there are thoughts which it is impossible to complete, and yet which are still real, in the sense that they are normal affections of the intellect... To say that we cannot know the Absolute, is, by implication, to affirm that there is an Absolute. In the very denial of our power to learn what the Absolute is, there lies hidden the assumption that it is; and the making of this assumption proves that the Absolute has been present to the mind, not as a nothing, but as a something" (pp. 71-72). The Absolute is the *wholly other* of our thoughts, and our consciousness being limited to our thoughts, the Absolute, to us, as long as we remain individuals, is bound to lie outside the region of any definite consciousness or experience. But the Vedanta

boldly proclaims that Brahman becomes the content and existence, all at once, of our essential consciousness, the moment thought exceeds itself and enjoys universal being. The Brahman that is affirmed in the Vedanta is not an existence cut off from definite and immediate knowledge—for there can be no such thing as existence ultimately independent of knowledge.

### **General Nature of Reality**

The following views of Swami Sivananda in regard to the nature of Brahman can be gathered from his *Philosophy and Teachings* (pp. 23-37):

Brahman is the ultimate Self of the universe, essentially actionless, though the cause of all actions. While being the basis of all action, even the action of thinking, reasoning, proving, etc., it ought to be evidently prior to action, prior to even thought and reason. The basis of action cannot itself be identified with action, and such is Brahman which is the motionless screen upon which appears the moving panorama of the universe. As the ultimate consciousness, Brahman is the most undeniable truth. Being the Self of all, it cannot be denied, for the denial of it would imply the denial of one's own self. As the Taittiriya Upanishad puts it: 'Who regards Brahman as non-existent, he is himself non-existent, and he is said to be really existent, who knows Brahman as existence.' Brahman is the basis of all presuppositions, demonstrations and notions. The existence of Brahman is beyond doubt, for it becomes amply demonstrated in the obvious fact that to break through the circle of causes and effects in this phenomenal



world, we must look for an existence which does not change or depend on another, is always the same and is the causeless cause of changeable existence. Unless there exists one continuous principle equally connected with the past, present and future, we shall be unable to account for remembrance, recognition, birth and reincarnation, for perception, cognition, and experience of a connected and a related world, whether objectively or subjectively.

Human knowledge, limited as it is, has reference to a knowledge which is not finite. Having arrived at this conclusion, if we again reflect on our own nature, we find within us a permanent element to which all the modifications of knowledge refer, and which, by its very nature, has to be infinite. It is the Absolute which grasps without hands, moves without feet, sees without eyes, hears without ears, and knows by a knowledge which does not disappear with or get involved in the different acts of knowledge, which remains unaltered in all those acts and without which they are impossible. It is, in one word, our own Self, the Soul of souls, which is free from any limits and is independent of the objects of knowledge. It is the Light of lights, the Life of lives, the Mind of minds, the hidden Love that embraces all in its oneness. As a lump of salt has neither inside nor outside, but is entirely a mass of taste throughout, so indeed has Brahman neither inside nor outside, but is entirely a mass of knowledge. Just as a lump of salt has, inside as well as outside it, one and the same taste, without difference of any kind, so is Brahman, inside as well as outside, one and the same intelligence. 'Inside' and 'outside' are, in fact, mental creations. When the mind

melts in the supreme silence, the ideas of inside and outside vanish. The sage cognises the one illimitable consciousness only. Though the idea of Brahman, when judged from the viewpoint of the intellect, is an abstraction, it is really the highest of concretes and the most positive of beings for those who have the direct vision of it in their own consciousness.

The variety of experiences is not real, nay, even experience itself, as the human being is acquainted with it, is nowhere from the point of view of Brahman. To lead the life wherein the multitude of experiences do not affect either our weal or woe, is the highest practical rule of conduct in accordance with the proper aim of existence. Variety in experience creates distinctions and sets up false limits where there exists none. In Brahman no such distinctions are possible, and the highest bliss which cannot be described in words other than those employing the negation of everything positive known to us, consists in overcoming all separateness and realising the unity which is the very being and nature of the cosmos. When this dualistic sense is transcended by intense spiritual Sadhana, one becomes identified with Brahman. Brahman, being the cause of all, is not an effect, and not being an effect, it is eternal. It, however, should not be construed in the sense of being a cause which can pass over into an effect in a temporal succession, for the production of an effect involves ordinarily a modification of the cause, and Brahman being eternal cannot be said to undergo any modification. It appears to be the cause from the empirical point of view, while in itself it is neither a cause nor an

effect. Brahman has no cause into which it could be absorbed. It is endless, it does not decay or suffer diminution, for what decays is ephemeral, and the ephemeral cannot be real.

It is true that even appearances are, and as such they must find a place in the Absolute. But the condition in which they can be said to exist in it has to be made clear. It should not be supposed that objects of the world, as they appear to the senses, can in any way be transferred to the Absolute, even by a different arrangement, or in a cosmic sense. It is not merely the pattern of the appearance, but their very quality and essence, that makes them different from reality or one with reality. The spatial and temporal forms have to be completely shed while taking the appearances to the Absolute. *Nama* and *Rupa* have Sat-chit-ananda in them, but Sat-chit-ananda has no *Nama* or *Rupa*. Appearances have reality in them, but reality is different from appearances. Appearances do not exist in the Absolute even as its adjectives, for it can have no adjectives other than itself. Qualities have a meaning only in the sense-world. There is no quality without relations, and all relations are empirical. A relational Absolute must be perishable, for, here, its very essence is said to include distinction, and all distinction presupposes individuality. The two terms of a relation are really separated by an unbridgeable gulf, and no stretch of imagination can intelligibly bring out their connection. If the two terms are identical, there is no relation, for there will then be no two things to be related. But if the two terms are different from each other, they can bear no relation. The Absolute has no

qualities or relations, for it is beyond thought. The proof of its existence is itself.

### **Brahman in the Upanishads**

The standard exposition of the nature of Brahman in Indian philosophy is made available to us in the Upanishads. Brahman is declared by the sage Yajnavalkya to be above all sensible contents. “That which is above the sky, that which is beneath the earth, that which is between the sky and the earth, that which people call the past and the present and the future—across what is that woven, warp and woof?” “Across space”, replies Yajnavalkya. “Across what, then, pray, is space woven?” “That, O Gargi, Brahmanas call the Imperishable.” “Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable, the sun and the moon stand apart. Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable, the earth and the sky stand apart. Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable, the moments, the hours, the days, the nights, the fortnights, the months, the seasons and the years stand apart. Verily, O Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable, some rivers flow from the snowy mountains to the east, others to the west, in whatever direction each flows.” Brahman is also referred to as being fearful like the uplifted thunderbolt, by knowing which one becomes immortal. It is for fear of Brahman that the different divinities presiding over the universe do their duties properly. Brahman is not confined to any particular part or manifestation of the universe. It is the Infinite, where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else and understands nothing else, and which is the highest

consummation of bliss. Brahman is not to be observed externally, but to be realised everywhere in its perfection. The moment one realises this Being which is immortal, unrestricted, undifferentenced, self-supported, unconditioned, which is below, above, behind, before, to the right, to the left, which is, in fact, the whole universe—for such a one of true realisation everything rises from everywhere, instantaneously.

The supersensuous character of Brahman has been perspicaciously pointed out by Yajnavalkya in his instructions to Maitreyi: “Where there is duality, as it were, there one sees another, one smells another, one tastes another, one speaks to another;... but where everything has become just one’s own Self, then by what and whom would one see? Then by what and whom would one smell, by what and whom would one speak, by what and whom would one hear, by what and of whom would one think, by what and whom would one touch, by what and whom would one understand?” The whole purport of this teaching is that perception is possible only where there is duality. Brahman is metempirical and so not involved in dualistic perceptions. The different sense-functions enumerated by Yajnavalkya have a significance only when there is an object second to oneself. When the knower or the observer is the sole existence, then there can be no external perception. It is also affirmed that there is no consciousness after the death of individuality, for in non-individual experience there is no consciousness of an object other than the Absolute. Human knowledge is denied in Brahman. The Kaushitaki Upanishad also refers to the Infinite as that

in which all things become one, and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad describes it as an ocean of the unity of the Self in which the limitations caused by terms and relations are transcended. There is no place in it for what man knows to be real. But it does not mean that in the Absolute the values recognised through the senses here by man are cancelled in the sense of a diminution of content. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad we read: "Verily, while one does not see there (with the eyes), he is verily seeing, though he does not see (what is usually to be seen); for there is no cessation of the seeing of the seer, because of his imperishability (as a seer). It is not, however, a second thing other than himself, and separate, that he may see." In like manner, there is said to be no cessation of the functions of smell, taste, speech, hearing, thinking, touching, and knowing, as there is not a second thing there, other than and separate from the Self. The Upanishad seers, while trying to give the best possible images to illustrate the nature of the supreme bliss of Brahman, recognised the inadequacy of all mundane analogies in their application to the supermundane reality. It is a consciousness-unity without an object outside it, a bliss without an external content, and in trying to describe this indescribable state the seer hits upon the symbol of the union of earthly lovers as perhaps the only one that seems to approximate the ideal. Yet, the comparison is a poor apology, for the bliss of Brahman cannot be contained in the mind.

Brahman, according to the Upanishads, is not merely a sovereign of the universe, but its very material and content. "The Atman alone is all this", declares the Chhandogya

Upanishad. According to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, “This Brahmanahood, this Kshatrahood, these worlds, these gods, these Vedas, these beings, in fact, everything here is only the Atman.” “Who is this one?” asks the Aitareya Upanishad, and the reply given is: “He is Brahma, He is Indra, He is Prajapati, He is all the gods, and these five great elements, viz., the earth, air, sky, water, light; these things and those which are mingled with the subtle, as it were; origins of the one kind or the other: those born from an egg, and those born from a womb, and those born from sweat, and those born from a sprout; horses, cows, persons, elephants; whatever breathing thing here is, whether moving or flying, and what is stationary. All this has Consciousness as its light, is established in Consciousness.”

The Real is described in the Rig-Veda as the one existence—Ekam Sat—which the wise are said to speak of in diverse ways. The characteristics attributable to Brahman are merely our ways of particularising what is beyond our comprehension. Truly, Brahman cannot even be said to be one, for the idea of the one would give rise to the idea of not-one. Hence it is described as non-dual, secondless. Brahman can be best defined only negatively as ‘Neti, Neti’, negating conceptual attributes, which means that we can only say of Brahman what it is not and not what it is. To give any positive idea of it would be to limit it to the categories of thought. It is not to be established by the ordinary proofs of knowledge—sense-perception, inference, comparison, presumption and non-apprehension. The only means of arriving at an appreciable knowledge of Brahman is Aptavakya or the testimony of

those who have *immediately* experienced it. For purposes of meditation, the Upanishads speak of Brahman as Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam—Reality, knowledge, infinity; as Vijnanam and Anandam—wisdom and bliss. But these are to be taken more as aids in Sadhana than assertions positive of the ultimate Reality. A brilliant statement of the nature of Brahman is to be found in the Bhagavad Gita: “It is that which is to be known, knowing which one attains immortality: that beginningless supreme Brahman is to be designated neither as being nor as non-being. With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, it exists enveloping everything in this world. Shining through the functions of all the senses, yet without any of the senses; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities, yet the experiencer of qualities; without and within all beings, the unmoving and also the moving; because of its subtlety, it is unknowable; and far away and near is That. And undivided, yet it exists as if divided in beings; that is to be known as the supporter of beings; it devours and generates. That, the Light even of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness; knowledge, knowable, the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all.” “Neither does the sun illumine That, nor the moon nor fire; that is My supreme Abode, having gone whither, they return not” (Ch. XIII. 12-17; XV. 6). To attain it is to be blessed with Moksha.



## **CHAPTER IX: ISVARA OR THE UNIVERSAL SOUL**

### **The Existence of God**

The transcendent Brahman does not bear any relation to the universe. The nature of its existence is such that it cannot have distinctions within it or outside it. It is free from the threefold differentiation: Sajatiya, Vijatiya and Svagata. It is beyond the world in every sense of the term, and cannot be discovered in anything that we can hope to know. The perishable does not satisfy our quest for the eternal. Brahman is Nishprapancha, Prapanchopasama, a being which is free from the universe, and in which the universe ceases to be. But without holding allegiance to the existence of Brahman, the world cannot be. The world is dependent on Brahman. In this respect, the names and forms and activities of the world are directed by Brahman; the world automatically receives, in different degrees, inspiration and reality from the existence, consciousness and bliss of Brahman. Brahman envisaged thus by the individuals, as the supreme Cause and the Director of the universe, is Isvara, the Cosmic Being. Isvara is omnipresent, for He supports and animates every speck of creation by His immanence. He is omniscient, for He has a direct intuition of all things, manifest and unmanifest. He is also the Divine Self and the Inner Ruler of the cosmos. The knowledge which Isvara has of the universe is not relational, not brought about by a mental function, and does not labour under the limitations of space and time, but immediate in its essence and spirit. It is not any outside knowledge of an object, but knowledge as the being of the object itself. He is omnipotent, for He has the power to do,

undo or transform the universe as a whole, for the universe is His Body. He is called the Creator of the universe, for it is He that initiates the appearance of all things by the activity of His consciousness. This work of Isvara never comes to a cessation until the universe is withdrawn into Him, and this process is felt and continues in different degrees, in every bit of His creation. He is the Preserver of the universe, as the sustenance of all life requires the operation of His Spirit. His existence and activity are felt by us wherever and whenever we think of Him intensely. He is the Destroyer or the final transformer of the universe, into whom the universe is withdrawn in the end, to whom all beings return on the completion of the working out of their deeds in the present cycle. Isvara is the natural and necessary counter-correlative of the world taken as an object of individualistic observation.

The characteristics of Isvara, as enumerated above, are the *Tatasthalakshanas* or the accidental attributes of Brahman. The appearance of Brahman as Isvara continues as long as there is the experience of the world and the individual. The fact that there is an observer implies that there is an external world. And the fact of the existence of an objective world, again, entails the recognition of a supreme Creator and Director of beings. If there is an individual, there ought to be a world, and if there is a world, there ought to be God. Isvara, Jagat and Jiva—God, the world and the individual—go together, one implying the others, and not being possible without the others. The three principles are the basic contents of all relative experience.

The concept of God involves certain unavoidable presuppositions, if it is to stand the test of reason. We are obliged to hold that God must be one, and not more than one. A perfect God ought to be self-dependent, and a plurality or even a duality of gods would introduce a kind of limitation and dependence. A universe with many gods cannot be governed harmoniously, for there would be conflict of purpose among them. The system and order in Nature demand that the Sovereign of the universe must be one. God ought to be an uncaused reality, and though everything of which God is the cause has to be in space and time, God, who is the causeless Cause, is above space and time. The sequence of effects which proceed from God is more logical than chronological. As the final goal of all beings, God directs all movements towards Himself by an upward pull, as it were, by being the determining destination of the entire creation. He is the fulfilment of all aspirations and needs, and the realisation of Him is the great blessedness of any mortal. God has a direct knowledge of the inner workings of Nature, in their completest detail. Though He transcends all individual values, He is the conservation of all values, and constitutes their eternal home. In Him all values exist in their truest essence. Not only this, God Himself is the highest value and end of universal existence. To realise Him is to rise to the centre of the cosmos and to rule it with unlimited knowledge and suzerainty. Man realises his ideals more and more as and when his consciousness approximates, in greater and greater degree, the being of God. The deeper the realisation, the more inward is the manner in which the values are

enjoyed in a condition which tends to advance towards infinitude, in which the remoteness of ideals gets expanded into a boundless Spirit, with neither inside nor outside. God is the be-all and the end-all of creation.

### **Arguments for the Existence of God**

St. Thomas Aquinas advances five proofs for the existence of God. The first is the argument from motion, which holds that all motion presupposes the existence of something which is not itself subject to motion. Motion implies a motionless ground. The motion that characterises the world ought to be logically preceded by an unmoved Mover, an ultimate being who is not moved by anything else, who ought to be the basis of the motion of all things. The second is the causal argument that, as every effect has a cause, the causal chain would lead to an endless regress if a final uncaused Cause is not posited. Without the admission of such a Cause, the very concept of causality, which holds sway over the world, would lose its meaning. The final cause has, therefore, no other cause outside itself, it is the final form without matter in it. The third is the cosmological argument which points out that all contingent events necessarily imply an eternal substance which itself is not contingent. The very consciousness of finitude gives rise to the consciousness of the infinite. The fourth is the henological argument, according to which the concept of more and less in the things of this world signifies the existence of a maximum value whose manifestation in various degrees creates in us and in things the idea of more or less of value. The various grades of relative perfection

and imperfection in the world indicate that there ought to be an absolute state whose partial revelations here give meaning to these relative expressions. The fifth is the teleological argument or the argument from design and adaptation, which infers the existence of God as the supreme intelligence, on the basis of the purposive adaptation seen in Nature and the ordered design for which it appears to be meant. The purpose that is discovered in Nature cannot be accounted for otherwise than by admitting the presence of a supremely intelligent Creator, a wise Architect of the universe. The different parts of the universe harmoniously fit in with one another's purposes, and adjust and adapt themselves for an end beyond themselves. All this shows that there ought to be a purposive Agent who has brought about all this adaptation, system and order in creation. God, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, is, therefore, One, the unmoved Mover, the causeless Cause, the eternal Substance, the highest Perfection, supreme Intelligence, and the Maximum of being.

In his treatise on divine government, given in his *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas says: "I answer that certain ancient philosophers denied the government of the world, saying that all things happened by chance. But such an opinion can be refuted as impossible in two ways. First, by the observation of things themselves. For we observe that in Nature things happen always or nearly always for the best; which would not be the case unless some sort of Providence directed Nature towards good as an end. And this is to govern. Therefore, the unfailing order we observe in things

is the sign of their being governed. For instance, if we were to enter a well-ordered house, we would gather from the order manifested in the house the notion of a governor, as Cicero says, quoting Aristotle. Secondly, this is clear from a consideration of the divine goodness which, as we have said above, is the cause of the production of things in being. For, as it belongs to the best to produce the best, it is not fitting that the supreme goodness of God should produce things without giving them their perfection. Now a thing's ultimate perfection consists in the attainment of its end. Therefore, it belongs to the divine goodness, as it brought things into being, so to lead them to their end. And this is to govern." "Hence, as the movement of the arrow towards a definite end shows clearly that it is directed by someone with knowledge, so the unvarying course of natural things which are without knowledge shows clearly that the world is governed by some Reason."

St. Thomas argues that as the beginning of the universe is outside itself, the end of all things in the universe should be a transcendent good which is not to be sought within the universe. The highest good is the highest end of all beings. As the particular end of anything is a particular form of good, so the universal end of all things ought to be the universal good, which can only be one. And this good has to be identified with God, for it is the good of and for itself by virtue of its essence and existence, whereas a particular good is good only by participation. Every form of good that is conceivable in the universe is, according to Aquinas, a good only by sharing in a higher good. The good of the whole world cannot be within itself, but ought to transcend

it. Everything under the sun, in the opinion of Aquinas, is generated and corrupted in accordance with the sun's movement. A certain amount of chance seems to characterise all that is mundane. And the very fact that an element of chance is discovered in things here on earth proves that they are subject to a government of a higher order. For, unless corruptible things were governed by a higher being, there would be no order but only chaos, no definiteness but only indeterminacy everywhere. Things lacking knowledge, naturally, get guided by a being endowed with knowledge. All activity in the universe is intentional and purposive, directed by the supreme decree of God.

Swami Sivananda, accepting the famous arguments for the existence of God—the ontological, the cosmological and the theological—would endorse the theological proofs of St. Thomas Aquinas. The feeling of the 'I', according to him, is rooted in an existence which cannot be doubted. The existence of the Self is existence in general, and is enjoyed by everyone. The Self of everyone bears testimony to the existence of the Self which comprehends the entire universe. This universal Self is God. Though one is encased in this finite body, one can think and feel: 'I am infinite', through an irresistible urge which tends to direct all thought towards the achievement of such being. Such an urge from within cannot possibly be, unless there is a reality to which it points. "You always feel: 'I exist.' You can never deny your existence. Existence is Brahman, your own inner immortal Self." "Though I am encased in this finite body, though I am imperfect and mortal on account of egoism, I

can think of the infinite, the perfect, the immortal being. This idea of the infinite can arise only from an infinite being” (*Wisdom Nectar*, p. 188).

Swami Sivananda observes that the concept of the finite posits the infinite. “Everything is changing in this world. There must be a substratum that is unchanging. We cannot think of a changing thing without thinking of something which is unchanging. Forms are finite. You cannot think of a finite object without thinking of something beyond.” This has similarity to the argument for the existence of the infinite from the contingent nature of things. Further he adds: “There is beauty, intelligence, luminosity, law, order, harmony, in spite of apparent disorder and disharmony. There must be an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent being who governs and controls this vast universe” (*Ibid.* pp. 188-89). The world has the character of an effect, which is observable from the vicissitudes it constantly undergoes, and the effect always attempts to find rest in its cause. The human mind feels itself constrained to carry the causal argument to its logical limits and posit at one end of the series a cause of all things in the world of time, though it is itself outside all temporal events. Every visible cause has another higher cause which is more pervasive and enduring. God is the name we give to the highest cause. “In this world of phenomena, there is a cause for everything. The law of cause and effect operates. There is the cause, the father, for the effect which is the child. There is the cause, the seed, for the effect which is the tree. There is the cause, the potter, for the effect which is the pot.” “You see this world. There must be a cause for this world, which is an



effect. That causeless cause is God or the creator” (*Ibid.* p. 189).

Udayana, the great Naiyayika, offers the following orthodox proofs for the existence of God: 1. The world of perception is of the nature of an effect, and every effect must have a cause. We have to infer the cause of the world, as the world has a tendency to reduce itself to its elements. The composite parts get disintegrated and return to their causes, and the ultimate cause of all composite substances should be one that is above all effected things. And this cause must have a direct knowledge of the material causes of the world. Such an intelligent being must be God. 2. The conjunction of the causal elements into effects requires an intelligent operator. The combination of atoms into groups at the time of creation cannot but be the work of a purposive conscious being. The atoms do not combine pell-mell or at random. There is to be seen the hand of a wise organiser behind the systematic grouping of the ultimate atoms into dyads and molecules. That final organiser is God. 3. We observe that the things of the universe are well-supported; its parts, like the planets etc., are held together, so that they do not collapse. The holder of such different parts in balance, to constitute a system, must be God Himself, for nothing that is in the universe can support the universe. 4. The world is observed to dissolve itself into subtler causes. The dissolution of the effect into its cause means that there is a source into which the effect returns. The ultimate source of the universe, then, should be beyond the universe, and it is God. 5. No knowledge can come to us of the different things here, unless there is a source of this

knowledge. The origin of all knowledge should be omniscient, and, consequently, omnipotent. Such a being is not to be seen in this universe, and so it must be outside it. This being is God. 6. The Vedas are held to be valid and authoritative from time immemorial. Such authoritativeness of the Vedas as true and valid knowledge cannot be without an author behind them, who ought to be an all-knower. This all-knower is God. 7. The Vedas cannot have any human author, because they deal with truths which no human being knows. Hence the author of the Vedas ought to be a superhuman being, and this being is God. 8. A sentence, as it is known to us in the world, has a composer who joins the words together and frames it. In like manner, the sentences of the Vedas consisting of words should have a composer, and he cannot be anyone else than God. 9. The size of a dyad or a molecule depends on the number of the atoms that go to constitute it. This requisite number of the atoms that go to form a particular compound could not have been originally the object of the perception of any human being; so its contemplator must be God. The Naiyayikas also add that the fruit of an individual's actions does not always lie within the reach of the individual who is the agent. There ought to be, therefore, a dispenser of the fruits of actions, and this supreme dispenser is God.

The Yoga system of Patanjali considers God as the unsurpassed seed of omniscience. The possibility of the omniscience and the necessity to admit a source for it leads to the positing of a supreme Being who is unaffected by the changes characterised by affliction, action, fruition and the

tendencies in keeping with such fruition. The knowledge which the different individuals are endowed with in this world is not of the same degree; there are grades in the manifestation of knowledge. There is an ascending degree of knowledge, power and happiness in accordance with the extent of the inclusiveness of the contents of knowledge. The greater the extent of the contents, the wider is the knowledge. The various degrees of knowledge in the world suggest a maximum ideal of knowledge, a state of omniscience which ought to be identified with eternal existence. Now this state of omniscience that is compatible with eternity cannot be found in any limited individual, for none here is seen to be all-wise. An omniscient being cannot be any individual, and he can be no other than God. God enjoys the highest perfection, being endowed with the greatest magnitude of knowledge and power. He alone can be omnipotent and be the Universal King.

The Nasadiya-Sukta of the Rig-Veda proclaims that at the beginning of things there was Tamas, darkness pervading everywhere, and in the midst of this universal darkness the Light of the One shone, all by itself. This glorious Intelligence is to be identified with the Self-born, Svayambhu, having no cause outside it. This Self-born emerged from the primordial Tamas, by means of its Tapas of untarnished knowledge, and projected this variegated world of individuals. "Darkness there was; in the beginning all this was a sea without light; the germ that lay covered by the husk, that One was born by the power of Tapas" (Rig-Veda, X. 129). The Rig-Veda extols the Hiranyagarbha as the first God of beings. "Hiranyagarbha was present in the

beginning; when born, he was the sole lord of created beings; he upheld this earth and heaven—to which God we offer worship with oblation. (To Him) who is the giver of soul-force, the giver of strength, who is contemplated by everything, whom even the gods obey, whose shadow is immortality as well as death—to which God we offer worship with oblation” (X. 121). “With eyes everywhere, with faces everywhere, with hands everywhere, with feet everywhere, He traverses with His arms and with His swift-moving (feet), and exists as the One God, generating heaven and earth” (X. 81). “He who is our parent, the creator, the ordainer, who knows our abodes and all beings, who is the name-giver to the gods—He is One; Him other beings come to inquire” (X. 82). The Purusha-Sukta refers to the great Lord as encompassing everything. “Thousand-headed was the Purusha, thousand-eyed and thousand-legged. He, covering the earth on all sides, stretched Himself beyond it by ten fingers’ length. All this is the Purusha alone, whatever was and whatever shall be... One-fourth of Him all beings are, three-fourth of Him is immortal in the heaven” (X. 90). The Absolute itself appears as Isvara. “From Him Virat was born, and from Virat, again, Purusha.” Isvara is the body as well as the soul of the world.

Following this great theme of the Veda, Manu, at the commencement of his code of law, states: “In the beginning all this was covered over by darkness, unknowable, indefinable, unarguable, indeterminable; the universe appeared to be in a state of sleep, as it were. Then, the Self-originated Divine Being, Himself unmanifested, manifested

this universe with its great elements etc., by tearing the veil of this darkness and revealing the forms of His creative energy. He, who is not to be beheld by the senses, who is subtle, the unmanifest, the everlasting, the unthinkable, the very embodiment of all beings—He, of Himself, rose above this primordial darkness” (*Manu-Smriti*, I. 5-7). The Srimad Bhagavata records the spirit of this doctrine in the words of the Lord Himself: “I alone was in the beginning of things, the one beyond the manifest as well as the unmanifest, and there was nothing else. And I alone shall be at the end of things. I alone am all this that is manifest; and whatever remains other than this, that also is I Myself alone” (II. ix. 32). The Lord speaks in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “I am the Vedic rite, I the sacrifice, I the food offered to the manes, I am the herbs and the medicines, I am the sacred formula and the hymn; I am the clarified butter (offered in sacrifices); I am the consecrated fire, I the oblation. I am the Father of this world, the Mother, Supporter, the Grandfather; I am the object to be known, I the purifier (of all things), the syllable OM, and also the sacred lore of the Rik, the Sama and the Yajus; the Goal, the Sustainer, the Lord, the Witness, the Abode, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the Dissolution, the Basis, the Storehouse, the Imperishable Seed. I give heat, I sent forth rain, and also withhold it; I am immortality and also death; I am being and also non-being, O Arjuna!” (IX. 16-19). Isvara is described in the Gita as having manifested Himself here as the all-destroying Time.

## **The Limitations of Reason**

The true nature of God and His creation cannot be intellectually comprehended, for logic is a proud child of the dualist prejudice. If God alone is all this world, the relation between Him and the world no mortal can hope to know. Man's idea of God is highly defective, for God, as man understands Him, is relative to the appearance of the world. God is a pure subject opposed to a world of creation set before Him as an object cannot be absolute; and if He is not thus opposed, He ceases to have any external relation to the world. If God is a universal consciousness having the universe as His object, He cannot be connected with it except by a spatio-temporal knowledge. Such a knowing process, however, is inadmissible in the case of God, for He is said to be untouched by the vitiating divisions of space and time. But without this division, God cannot be distinguished from the Absolute which will not brook any objectivation of itself. The gulf between the infinite Purusha of the Sankhya and the Prakriti which vies with the former in almost every respect is an instance of the defeat which the human intellect has to suffer when it attempts to visualise a reality which is non-mediatly related to the universe and yet is not the same as the universe. The God who is in man's mind cannot be freed from the difficulty of having to melt down to undifferentiated being when His relation to the world is closely examined. Isvara's existence happens to be relative to the demands of His self-manifesting work. He is, as long as the universe is.

Further, we cannot say that God created the world at any period of time. If the creative act is not in time, it being

the condition even of time, there would be no creation of a temporal world. Creation is a process, and all process is in time. There is no process that can be dovetailed with eternity. To cause anything, God may have to descend into time, and a descent into time is a descent into finitude, change and a veritable self-destruction. If God is to bear any relation to phenomena, He has to shed His eternal nature first. But somehow He creates and sustains the world without losing His eternity. This the human intellect cannot understand. The Absolute sports in the relative. The individuals of the world arise as appearances participating in a relative interdependence of existence and nature. If there is no child, there is no parent, too. Isvara becomes an object of the notion of the Jiva, and a subject with the world as a predicate attached to it.

The logical character of truth and reality attributed to Isvara does not look consistent with our ascribing to Him the ethical character of goodness, the aesthetic character of beauty and the religious character of grace, all which carry an individualistic purport. If Isvara is the all, such values turn to be different from what they mean to us here in this world. And why has Isvara created the world? It cannot be for His satisfaction, for He has no wish or desire to fulfil. It cannot be with a view to dispensing justice or showing mercy to others, for there are no others, as all beings are subsequent to the creative act. It cannot be a play of Isvara, for play is normally supposed to be the result of a need felt within to direct outside the excess of energy in the psychophysical organism, to overcome fatigue or boredom, or to replenish the system with fresh energy after an exhausting

work. Isvara can have no such needs, for He is not an individual organism. If Isvara is only a witness of the sports of Prakriti which moves and acts at the inspiration received from His mere existence, He would have a determining element outside Him, which would prevent Him from being an absolute monarch. Isvara is Brahman envisaged by our experiential conditions in relation to a world of change. The question of creation is restricted to the world of the senses and the intellect, and the answer to it cannot but be empirically bound. There cannot be a correct answer to an erroneous question. That the world is, is a belief of ours, and the whole problem of creation hinges on how we react to our environment as dismembered bodies in a cosmic society.

The futility of the logical methods in determining the nature of Isvara does not imply, however, that there is no Intelligence underlying the world and influencing it throughout. For a denial of such a being would entail a denial of the world, and, consequently, our own selves as individuals. Certain inherent defects in our faculties of knowing prevent us from comprehending transcendent truths in a proper manner. It does not follow that the invisible is always non-existent. If we are, the world is; and if the world is, Isvara also is. If Isvara is not, the world also is not; and we as individuals, too, cannot be. There is reciprocal dependence of the existence of these three principles always. Our concepts are relative; the absolutely real is only Brahman. But as long as we accept our own existence as diversified elements in a world, a sovereign being giving meaning to life cannot be doubted. Our own



conscious powers within us urge us to accept that Isvara must be. The scriptures corroborate our inner spiritual aspirations and extol an Isvara who is the creator of this world. Swami Sivananda countenances the Lila theory of creation, not with a view to offering it as any final explanation of the world, but to bringing out the idea that the creative act of Isvara is free from any taint of selfishness or ulterior motive, and to suggest that it is beyond the purview of the human mind. It is the nature of Isvara to create, to manifest and unfold the world; there is no other reason for it that is humanly conceivable. To show that Isvara has no personal interest whatsoever, it is also added that He only helps creation, which is really a manifestation or expression of the dormant potencies of the individuals who, not being liberated at the end of the previous cycle, existed in a latent form during the dissolution of the universe after that cycle. Rain may help the growth of a plant, but the nature of the plant depends on the seed from which it grows. The sun may help the activities of the world, but he remains unaffected by the results of such activities.

The theory of the creation of the world by Isvara is not to be taken as any statement of ultimate fact, but is meant to serve as a working hypothesis introduced to bring out the idea of the non-difference of the world from Brahman. Srishti or creation, and Pravesa or the entrance of Isvara into the world in His immanence, are Arthavadas or eulogical concepts intended to bring home to the mind of man the fact of the secondlessness of Brahman and the total dependence of the world on Brahman. No explanation of

the why or the how of creation, and no concept of Isvara as the supreme Ruler of the world, can be finally satisfactory, for such statements and concepts are based on a false faith in the individuality of the self and the variety of the world of experience. But they are serviceable as a *modus operandi* in directing the individual from his ignorant prejudices of a bodily existence to the splendour of the Absolute. Isvara is sometimes said to be supreme Self-consciousness. But the Self-conscious Brahman would require something as an other-than-itself, at least space, to make such a condition possible. Brahman does not stand in need of knowing itself either as a subject or an object. But it has somehow to be related to the world. The result is Isvara. How such a relation is possible, the intellect is not fortunate enough to know. It calls this mystery 'Maya'.

### **The Inner Ruler and Controller**

The nature of Isvara as portrayed by Swami Sivananda in his *Philosophy and Teachings* (pp. 107-12) can be presented as follows: If we look at reality from the practical point of view or Vyavaharika-Drishti, Isvara may be regarded as the cause, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world, and therefore as an omnipotent and omniscient being. Reality here appears to be possessed of all qualities, is conceived to be Saguna, and in this aspect it is called Isvara. Swami Sivananda does not appear to make in his writings the usual technical distinction between Saguna-Brahman and Isvara, as emphasised in certain texts of the Vedanta. Isvara becomes the object of the adoration of pious devotees. He is endowed with all the good and

glorious attributes that one can think of as raised to the degree of infinity. The Saguna-Brahman and the Nirguna-Brahman are not two Brahmanas, but one and the same reality looked at from two different standpoints, the lower or the Vyavaharika and the higher or the Paramarthika. Isvara is Sarvajna or all-knowing, and is the source of all powers. He is the Soul of all Nature, the animating breath of all beings. He is the cause from which appears the origin, the sustenance and the dissolution of the world. Brahman conceived as Cause is Isvara. He is above all evils and is the immanent Spirit or the Antaryamin pervading, maintaining and vibrating the whole universe as its very Self.

The Nirguna-Brahman is not the antithesis of Saguna-Brahman, but is the essence of the latter. Saguna-Brahman or Isvara is the material cause as well as the efficient cause of all things, associated differently with Tamas and Sattva. Brahman does not change itself into the universe, but the latter emerges from Isvara and exists in Him. Isvara becomes the Cause through His inscrutable power of self-expression. It is the principle of cosmic appearance that hides the real and manifests the unreal. By means of it Isvaratva is falsely superimposed on Brahman. But this superimposition is real to the Jivas, and so Isvara also is real to them. As the Jiva understands Him, Isvara is unproduced, has no cause, and is no effect. He Himself is the first Cause without any other origin. The Nirguna-Brahman becomes a personal God when it is viewed from the point of view of the universe. Isvara is consciousness defined by Maya (Maya-Visishtha-Chaitanya). Referring to the Antaryami-Brahmana of the Brihadaranyaka

Upanishad, Swami Sivananda writes: "The Internal Ruler must be Brahman or the Supreme Self. Why so? Because His qualities are mentioned in the passage under discussion. Brahman is the cause of all created things. Universal Rulership is an appropriate attribute of the Supreme Self only. Omnipotence, Selfhood, immortality, etc. can be ascribed only to Brahman. The passage, 'He whom the earth does not know', etc., shows that the Inner Ruler is not known by the earth-deity. Therefore, it is obvious that the Inner Ruler is different from that deity. The attributes 'unseen,' 'unheard,' etc., also, refer to the Supreme Self only, which is destitute of shape and other sensible qualities. He is also described in the section as being all-pervading, as He is inside and is the Ruler within of everything, viz., the earth, the sun, water, fire, sky, ether, the senses, etc. This also can be true only of the highest Self or Brahman. For all the reasons, the Inner Ruler is no other than the Supreme Self or Brahman" (*Brahmasutras, Vol. I, p. 110*). Here the Supreme Self or Brahman refers to the Absolute regarded as the Lord of the universe—Isvara.

"God is Truth. God is Love. God is the Light of lights. God is Knowledge. God is the embodiment of Bliss. God is Eternity. God is Immortality. God is Infinity." "That secondless Supreme Being; who resides in the chambers of your heart as the Inner Ruler or Controller, who has no beginning, middle or end, is God or Atman, or Brahman or Purusha or Chaitanya or Bhagavan or Purushottama." "Nitya-Sukha (eternal bliss), Parama-Santi (supreme peace), Nitya-Tripti (eternal satisfaction), Akhanda-Sukha (unbroken joy), and infinite happiness can be had only in

God.” “Srishti (creation), Sthiti (preservation), Samhara (destruction), Tirodhana (veiling) and Anugraha (blessing) are the five kinds of action (Pancha-kriya) of God.” “Bhagavan is a term synonymous with God. He who has the six attributes of Jnana (wisdom), Vairagya (dispassion), Yasas (fame), Aisvarya (divine powers), Sri (wealth) and Dharma (righteousness) in their fullest measure, is Bhagavan.” “Sarvajnatva (omniscience), Sarvesvaratva (supreme rulership), Sarvantaryamitva (inner control over all), Sarvakaranatva (causality in the creation, preservation and destruction of everything), Sarvaniyantritva (ability to bring restraint over all), Sarvakartritva (makership of all things), Sarvasaktimattva (omnipotence), Svatanttratva (absolute independence) are the seven attributes of God” (*Mind and Its Mysteries*, pp. 163-64). Isvara does not occupy any region of space, for there is no Loka or world for Isvara. Siva has Kailasaloka, Brahma has Brahmaloka and Vishnu has Vaikunthaloka. But Isvara, Hiranyagarbha and Virat, as manifestations of Brahman, transcend all planes of existence, while including everything within them.

The apparent differences that we observe in the world among the ways in which the individuals are made to experience pleasure and pain are not to be attributed to Isvara as their Inner Ruler but to the Karmas of the individuals themselves. Injustice and cruelty cannot at any time be imputed to the universal Lord, who is the same to all beings. God, in the process of the dispensation of justice, takes into consideration the nature of the actions done by the different individuals in their previous births. The

circumstances in which God places individuals are suited to the nature of their desires. God is not, strictly speaking, any arbitrary creator of the world but the primary principle responsible and necessary for the expression of an environment fitted to the manner in which the Karmas of the individuals have to fructify themselves in various ways. The life of an individual is determined, therefore, not by any caprice on the part of Isvara, but by its past deeds—good, bad or mixed. The question of a first creation of the world by Isvara, where no individuals could have existed to account for the nature of the world to be manifested, cannot arise, for there is no such thing as first creation. The factor of time cannot be set prior to creation. Creation is just an appearance, and when objectively viewed, it can have neither a beginning nor an end. Creation, when it is correctly understood, is not a temporal act or a fiat of the will of any person, but an interrelated appearance in which the observer or the questioner has no right to consider all things except himself as an object to be known and himself as a subject of knowledge. This is the defect of all scientific methods of approach. Empirically viewed, every form of existence has a previous existence, so that manifestation is beginningless. Such an infinite regress is inevitable when the temporal intellect attempts to comprehend Eternity. How appearance is related to reality, the logical intellect cannot know; and when it tries to know that, it is landed in fallacies and absurdities.

The work of creation by Isvara is to be considered His supreme Yoga. His acts receive their significance not through any outward implement but by the self-

manifestation of Himself by the immense powers that He possesses. Isvara does not need any instrument to project this universe, for it is in Himself. His Tapas or creative contemplation consists in the concentration of His omniscience, and His power is identical with His knowing and being. Though the limitations of the intellect compel us to conceive of Isvara as a personal God, he should not be compared to the human personality in any way. It is because one cannot say that Isvara creates the world by any outward compulsion or necessity that most philosophers are obliged to view creation as a Lila or sport. Even the Karmas of individuals cannot be any compelling factor forcing Isvara to create the world. His existence is a wonder, His ways are a mystery. Isvara has no desires, but without His primal wish the world cannot be explained. This wish, again, is not directed to the achievement of any purpose that is expected to bring Him personal satisfaction, for a cosmic being can have no motive, whatsoever. No sense of incompleteness on the part of Isvara can be said to be the cause of the rise of His Will to create. Creation is His nature. God Himself is the universe.

Isvara possesses an innate intuition which grasps all things at once. He can have no prejudices, no presuppositions, no attachments and no aversions, for He has nothing outside Himself. Isvara, in the beginning, sends forth His humanly indeterminable Will to create, in order to provide a field for the working out of the unfructified Karmas of unliberated individuals, who, during the previous dissolution of the universe, were withdrawn into the primordial condition of Prakriti. The Will of Isvara to

manifest phenomena sets the whole existence in vibration, and the unfulfilled potencies of the Karmas of individuals are set in motion, and these activated potencies attract towards their centres particles of matter that gravitate to form bodies in the manner required by each group of potencies. These bodies are the Bhogayatanas, receptacles for the enjoyment of pleasure and pain. One's body, senses, vital energy, mind, intellect, pleasure, pain, etc., are all determined by these forces of Karma. Isvara is the cosmic Director of this whole scheme; without His energy and will, no motion whatsoever is possible. Primary creation is the work of Isvara, and it begins with the rise of His Will and ends with the act of His entering into the bodies of all beings and animating their minds and intellects. There is also a secondary creation which is carried on by the individual, after the work of Isvara becomes complete, and this consists in the activity of experiencing the diverse conditions determining the states of waking, dream, sleep and the attainment of final liberation. In Isvara's creation there is freedom, while bondage is always implied in the projection of the individual.

In his *Jnana-Yoga*, Swami Sivananda confirms the following view: The primitive principle of appearance, which is essentially one, is called Maya when we take into account the predominance of its projecting power, and is called Avidya when we take into consideration the predominance of its enveloping power. Thus the objective principle, of which the projecting power is superior to the concealing power, is the limiting condition of Isvara; and the same principle with its concealing power predominant



is the limiting condition of the Jiva (the individual). The Avidya which forms the limiting adjunct of the Jiva is otherwise called Ajnana. That the projecting power is predominant in Isvara follows from His being the creator of this great universe. He is always conscious of His free state, and hence is untouched by the concealing power. The Jiva, on the contrary, labours under the ignorance of its true nature, owing to the predominance of the concealing power and the absence of the projecting power, and feels incompetent to create the universe, as Isvara does (p. 98). Here the projecting power referred to is the cosmic power of Isvara and not the individualistic force of distraction which makes one perceive diversity of things. When the Jiva sheds its cramping individuality, it finds itself in an experience of the majestic Unity of beings.

## CHAPTER X: THE JIVA

### The Defining Characteristics

*Jiva* is an appellation given to consciousness defined by the principles constituting individuality. It denotes the embodied being limited to the psycho-physical states. The notion of the Jiva is the basis of all world-experience. The concept of reality is arrived at by the analysis of the implications of this experience. We can observe in the individual self traces of the elements that go to form the universe as a whole. The delimited reflection of the eternal consciousness in the mind-stuff goes by the name of the Jiva. Understanding, feeling and willing are the primary functions of this reflected consciousness. The basis of the Jiva is Brahman, which is the substratum of all creation. But the arrogation of reality to itself by each form of the reflected consciousness becomes responsible for the notion of the 'I' in everyone. Though this 'I' has at its back the general reality of all things, it has reference to objectified conditions, and its reality is tremendously influenced by its perception of objects. Perception, inference and the other ways of valid knowledge, as well as wrong knowledge, doubt, sleep, memory, and the forms of error such as ignorance, egoism, likes, dislikes and the fear of death together with an intense love for life, are the principal psychological associations of the Jiva. Though the Jiva appears as a subject of knowledge in this world, it is not really the metaphysical subject, for its existence is not wholly independent of the appearance of objects; nay, its own body is part of the appearance. The organisation of individuality is relative to the framework of the contents of

the consciousness operating through it. The empirical subject is itself an object from the point of view of the Atman, and when divested of its psychological cloggings, it gets down to the irreducible minimum of pure being. The ideas connected with doership and enjoyership are inseparable from the consciousness of duality. The Jiva is, in truth, not a being, but a becoming, a state of experience attempting to transcend itself every moment. Activity cannot be avoided as long as individuality persists. This world is a world of action, where struggle is the law, striving the rule. The mutations of the universe get erroneously identified with the self, and it is this that gives rise to the idea of agency and enjoyership. Birth and death are the consequences of such wrong identification, for it results in the rise of several desires which clamour for fulfilment, and the way of their fulfilment is the drudgery of transmigratory life. Agency, however, is not essential to the innermost essence of the Jiva, for, if it were so, there would be no chances of achieving freedom at any time. All activity, when carefully viewed, is found to be of the nature of pain, but the essential Self is blissful by nature. The activities of the Jiva are not properties of the Atman, but are contingent features of the outward adjuncts that get confused with what they are not. The sense of agency and activity is attributable to the Upadhis which go to make up the Jiva.

It can be said that, in a sense, the Jiva is eternal, for its individuality is never destroyed in all the births and deaths it undergoes. But it is non-eternal in the sense that it is transfigured in the realisation of Brahman. The principle of

individuality is active in the waking and the dreaming states, but potential in sleep, swoon and death. But for its continuance even in times of the cessation of all its functions, it could not rise again in a new birth. When objective consciousness is absent, the Jiva exists in a latent form, ready to manifest itself in action whenever suitable conditions arise. Jivahood is completely negated in Brahman. The Jiva is different from Brahman as long as it is confined to the body, the Pranas, the senses and the Antahkarana, but one with it in its fundamental nature which it realises in profound meditation. From the point of view of the body, the Jiva is a hack working under the oppressive yoke of the laws of Nature; as a limited soul, it is a part of God; and as pure consciousness, it is identical with Brahman. From the structure of Jivahood as such, its relation to Brahman cannot be strictly determined. It cannot be said to be different from Brahman, for there is no second to Brahman. Nor is it a part of Brahman, for Brahman cannot be divided into elements. It cannot also be said to be the same as Brahman in its present form, for its limiting characters are incompatible with the perfection of Brahman. The Jiva passes for reality within the universe of its experience, but gets lifted up gradually in the different stages of self-transcendence, until it attains Brahman.

The Jiva is a limitation as well as a reflection, a Parichheda as well as an Abhasa of Brahman. It is inferior to Brahman not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. As restricted to the internal organ and the senses, it is Parichhinna or limited, and as an image of the highest consciousness, it is an Abhasa. As the defects of a reflected

image do not sully the original in any way, the defects of the Jiva do not affect Brahman even in the least. As a reflection, the Jiva is not genuine being but a process, and, as limited to the internal organ, even this process is not universal but localised. The nature of the mind is transferred to consciousness, and so the experiences of the Jiva are nothing but the feelings and the modes of the mind. The possibility of Jivahood has to be traced to the presence of Brahman in the background, albeit in the form of a reflection; but the content of this reflected consciousness is organically related to the movements of the Upadhis. The Jivachaitanya, thus, partakes of the double nature of reality as well as appearance.

The Atman, as the Kutasthachaitanya or the witnessing Self, is the ground of the Jiva, though in itself it is absolutely free from the limitations of Jivahood. The Atman does not modify or transform itself into the Jiva but exists only as an unrelated witness. There is the same inexplicability about the relation of the Jiva to the Atman as of Maya to Brahman, or of appearance to Reality. When the limiting conditions are withdrawn, the Jiva turns back to its source, which is the light of eternity. The birth, growth and death of the individual have meaning only in relation to its accidental circumstances. As the limiting features are incidental, Jivahood is non-eternal. The whole history of the Jiva is but the procession of the activities of these external vestures—nothing real to the Atman. The diversity of things is adventitious, their ultimate unity is essential. As long as there is a clinging to the conglomeration of the elements composing the individuality, there is bound to be

the sorrow attending upon the pain of transformation and death. The salvation of the Jiva consists in the giving up of its fictitious conceit of doership and enjoyership in the world and recognising the absolute perfection of Brahman.

### **The Bodies and the Sheaths**

An analysis of the nature of the Jiva is virtually a study of the various vestments in which the empirical consciousness is shrouded and which principally constitute its existence. Swami Sivananda, in his *Jnana-Yoga* (pp. 112-136), details this fascinating theme, and conducts the enquiry as follows:

There are three bodies, viz. the gross, the subtle and the causal. Contained in these bodies are the five sheaths, viz. the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the blissful. That which is seen by the physical eyes, that which is composed of flesh, bones, fat, skin, nerves, hair, blood, etc. is the physical body, the outermost sheath covering the inner consciousness. This body undergoes six kinds of change—empirical existence, birth, growth, change, decay and death. It grows in youth and decays in old age. It develops when nourishing food is given, and becomes weakened if food is withdrawn, or if it is overtaken by disease. This body is subject to decline and disintegration. The subtle body is composed of nineteen principles—the five senses of knowledge, the five organs of action, the five vital forces, the Manas, the Chitta, the Buddhi and the Ahamkara. This body grows and develops through egoism, attachment, love and hatred, and breaks down when it is freed from these encumbrances. It is affected by three kinds

of misery—the psychological, the physical and the heaven-ordained. The essence of the subtle body consists in Avidya, Kama and Karma—ignorance, desire and action. The causal body develops through the ideas: ‘I am a Jiva,’ and falls off when this idea gets weakened in intensity or is annihilated in the unification of the real ‘I’ with Brahman. The subtle and the causal bodies get thickened in worldly-minded persons on account of lust, greed and anger, and get thinned out in earnest spiritual aspirants who are free from these impurities. The subtle body is also called the Lingadeha, or Lingasarira, for it is the symbol or mark (Linga) of one’s individuality. It is the subtle body that materialises itself as the physical body, and is itself an expression of a part of the potencies lying dormant in the causal body.

We can clearly see the physical body as an object of the senses. But the subtle body does not become an object in this way, for the instruments of objective knowledge are contained in the subtle body itself, and it is too subtle to be perceived physically. The existence of this finer body can, however, be inferred from the effects produced as the nineteen principles constituting it. It is this ethereal aggregate that really carries on all the functions of the individual personality and uses the physical body as its instrument of action. Fire cooks food and also does other kinds of work with the aid of fuel; it cannot work without the instrumentality of some material. Yes, it is not the fuel that cooks food but the fire that burns through it. The functions of seeing, hearing, etc. that are performed by the subtle body depend upon the gross body for their outward

expression. The real doer and enjoyer is the Jivachaitanya, animating the subtle body. The physical body is inert, it cannot manifest intelligence, and so cannot be the real doer of anything. The Antahkarana or the internal organ in the subtle body is transparent owing to its being formed of the derivatives of Sattvaguna, and so it can reflect consciousness, though imperfectly, and keep up the busy life of the world.

The causal body is nothing but Ajnana or primitive ignorance. It is devoid of consciousness, for in it the Sattvaguna is subordinated to Rajas and Tamas. The causal body gets destroyed when the knowledge of the Atman dawns on the Jiva. The Atman is entirely different from the three bodies, the latter being external to consciousness. Their existence and intelligence are borrowed from another source which is infinite existence and intelligence.

The five sheaths are comprised in the three bodies, and the Atman is different from the sheaths. Just as clouds which are generated by the rays of the sun, and which exist on account of the sun, cover the sun itself; just as smoke which draws its existence from fire conceals fire itself; just as the snake which is erroneously perceived in a rope, and which owes its existence to the rope, hides the rope itself; just as a jar which exists on account of clay hides the perception of the clay in itself; just as ear-rings, etc., which owe their existence to gold, hide the incidence of the gold in them; so do the five sheaths, which owe their existence to the Atman, hide it from experience. It is the natural tendency of the mind to identify itself with the sheaths, and vice versa. This superimposition is mutual, and is caused by



Avidya. One has to realise one's distinction from the five sheaths by the practice of the method of 'Neti, Neti', declared in the Vedanta.

The physical sheath is the densest of all the five, and is called the Annamaya-Kosa. It is originated by a combination of Sukla and Sonita, or the male and female reproductive seeds, and is thus made up of the essence of food. It does not exist prior to birth or posterior to death, and so is non-eternal. It is preponderated by the quality of Tamas, and does not manifest consciousness. It is an effect of the combination of the five gross elements that go to make up this perceptible world. We do not see any consciousness in a dead body. If the gross body were to be the Atman, even the corpse ought to be conscious. In dream, the physical body remains immobile, as if deceased. On death, this body gets absorbed into the earth. Even when certain parts of the body are cut off, self-consciousness is observed to be intact. The physical sheath, therefore, cannot be the true knower.

The foolish man identifies himself with the mass of flesh, fat, skin, bones, etc., while a discerning person becomes aware that he is an intelligent principle. The Pandit who has only a theoretical knowledge identifies himself with a mixture of body, mind and soul, while the liberated sage regards the eternal consciousness as his Self. There cannot be a real connection between extended matter and unextended spirit. In Indian logic, two kinds of relationship are pointed out—Samavaya or inherence, and Samyoga or contact. Samavaya-Sambandha is the inseparable relation that is seen between the whole and its

parts, the class and the individual, the substance and its attribute, the actor and the action. *Samyoga-Sambandha* is the external relation that obtains between two objects, e.g., a drum and a stick. There cannot be the relation of inherence between the sheaths and the Atman, for the insentient and the ephemeral cannot be said to inhere in the sentient and the eternal. There cannot be a relation between entities possessing entirely dissimilar properties. There is not, again, between the sheaths and the Atman, any external contact, for the Atman is unlimited, while the sheaths are confined to spatial and temporal endurance. The two are not made of the same substance, and so there cannot be any contact between them. The apparent relation between the Atman and the sheaths is one of *Adhyasa* or erroneous imposition.

Superimposition can be of two kinds: partial and mutual. When we see a snake in a rope, the snake is superimposed on the rope, but there is no superimposition of the rope on the snake. This is an instance where the error is one-sided or partial. But the transference of attributes between the Atman and the sheaths is not thus overbalanced, but obtains on both sides; the superimposition is mutual. The essences of the Atman are projected on the sheaths and the defects of the sheaths are swung upon the Atman. This reciprocal superimposition is called *Anyonya-Adhyasa*. The nature of *Satchidananda* which belongs to the Atman is falsely attributed to the sheaths when one makes such statements as 'My body exists,' 'my body is intelligent,' 'my body is dear,' 'my life is precious,' etc. In statements like 'I am a man,' 'I am a male,'

'I live,' 'I grow,' 'I die,' 'I am hungry,' 'I am thirsty,' 'I am happy,' 'I am sorry,' etc., there is seen an interjection of the qualities of the sheaths on the Atman. It is this apparent relation that is brought about between the Atman and the sheaths that is the cause of one's bondage and suffering, and it is the aim of the Vedanta to enlighten the Jiva in its attempts to overcome this ignorance and to realise the Atman in this very life.

The vital sheath which lies next to the physical body consists of the five Pranas, actuating the five organs of action, and is called the Pranamaya-Kosa. When permeated by this sheath, the physical body engages itself in activity, as if it were living. There is a mutual superimposition, again, between the vital sheath and the Atman. The Prana is nothing but a force forming a link between the mind and the body. It is inert, is devoid of consciousness, and is an effect of Rajoguna. It has no knowledge of itself, and it cannot know others. In the state of deep sleep it exhibits its real nature of unconsciousness and inability to undertake any deliberate initiative. The Prana is a subtle force from the active principles of the five Tanmatras. The Atman, obviously, is different from this sheath. The function of the Prana is motion, and in the Atman all activity has to be denied as extraneous to the character of eternality.

The five senses of knowledge, together with the mind, make up the mental sheath, called the Manomaya-Kosa. The mind is the cause of the diversity of concepts and notions like 'I' and 'mine.' It creates egoism and attachment in regard to objects, such as house, wife, son, etc. It moves outward through the avenues of the senses, in the act of

perception. One generally feels: 'I think,' 'I fancy,' 'I am in grief,' 'I am happy,' 'I am deluded,' 'I am the seer, the hearer,' etc. Here the functions of the mental sheath are wrongly imputed to the Atman. Conversely, the stamp of the Atman is imprinted on the mental sheath. This phenomenon is observed when one expresses such feelings as 'My mind is,' 'my mind shines,' 'my mind is dear to me,' etc. The inner conflicts, the pains and the pleasures of life are attributable to this reciprocal superimposition between the mental sheath and the Atman.

The mind is not the Atman, for it is different from consciousness. If it were identical with the Atman, it ought to continue to work even in deep sleep. The mind is seen to lose its light and even its balance on several occasions. It is a product of Avidya, and is inert by nature. It is the outcome of the Sattva property of Prakriti, and so has a beginning and an end. It is only an instrument in the act of knowing, and is subject to modifications of various kinds. The Atman shines even in deep sleep, while the mind does not. The mental sheath pervades the vital sheath and gives it vigour by means of the activation of Vrittis, which work due to the impetus given by a consciousness borrowed from the Atman.

The intellectual sheath consists of the intellect working in collaboration with the senses of knowledge, and is called the Vijnanamaya-Kosa. One's predisposition to agency in action is attributed to this vesture of the soul. The intellect is the knower, which uses the mind as its instrument. One generally says: 'I have done this,' 'I am the doer,' 'I am one of firm determination,' 'I am possessed of intelligence,' etc.

Here the functions of the intellectual sheath are falsely ascribed to the Atman. In turn, the attributes of the Atman are transfused into the intellect, as when one opines, for instance: 'My intellect is,' 'my intellect shines,' 'my intellect is valuable.' The intellect cannot be the self luminous Atman, for it is subject to change, and has a beginning and an end. In deep sleep it is involved in ignorance, along with the Chidabhasa or the intelligence reflected through it. It appears to have knowledge on account of its being possessed of an increased amount of Sattvaguna and its proximity to the Atman in subtlety. In fact, the intellect is insentient, being objective, dualistic and limited. It is not eternally present, and so cannot be taken for the highest Self.

The innermost sheath is made up of Avidya or ignorance, in which Sattva is completely overpowered by Tamas and Rajas, and is known as the Anandamaya-Kosa. The great activity of this sheath goes on in the state of dreamless sleep, though it functions in dream and waking, also. The pleasure that one experiences in life is the result of a modification of this sheath. Its essential properties are the Vrittis of Priya or the happiness that arises in one at the mere sight of a desired object, Moda or the happiness which is felt when one is in possession of this object, and Pramoda or the happiness which one obtains from its actual enjoyment. The Anandamaya-Kosa makes itself spontaneously felt during the fruition of one's virtuous deeds. Man is wont to say: 'I am the enjoyer,' 'I am happy,' 'I am peaceful,' 'I am contented,' etc. Here, obviously the qualities of the Anandamaya-Kosa are carried over to the

Atman. And conversely, the nature of Satchidananda, which is the true Atman, is attributed to this Kosa in such feelings as: 'My happiness is,' 'my happiness is experienced,' 'my happiness is dear to me.'

The Anandamaya-Kosa cannot be the Atman, for it is affected by changeful qualities. It is a modification of Prakriti, and consists of the latent potencies of one's past actions. If the Anandamaya-Kosa were the Atman, one in deep sleep would enter into Samadhi and have an experience of the Absolute. Those who regard this sheath to be identical with the Atman forget that in sleep, when it has its fullest play, one does not have a knowledge of the Atman, but appears to be drowned in an ignorance from which he rises again to empirical activity, propelled by the forces hidden therein.

The five sheaths have, thus, no independent reality. Just as the mutations that take place in the body of a cow—growth, decay, etc., do not in the least affect the owner of the cow, who is only a witness, so the changes that occur in the sheaths do not touch the Atman which is their witness. Just as one can distinguish the sound of one person from that of another through the power of discrimination; just as by this faculty one can feel: 'This is soft, this is hard, this is hot, this is cold,' etc.; just as one can, by looking at a mural picture on a wall, say: 'This is blue colour, this is red colour, this is the wall,' etc., with one's discerning capacity, although one is not able to separate the red colour from the blue, or the picture from the wall; just as one can know by tasting a drink: 'This is lemonade, this is orange,' etc., through the understanding faculty; just as one can know

the odour in a cloth by the organ of smell, although the odour cannot really be separated from the cloth; so also one can clearly differentiate the Atman from the sheaths by an analysis and study of their respective natures. It is impossible for ordinary people to separate water from milk when the two are mixed together, but it is possible for a swan to do so. In like manner, though it is impossible for persons of gross understanding to distinguish between the Atman and the sheaths, yet, it is within the capacity of an aspirant endowed with subtle discrimination to fulfil this difficult task.

A doubt is likely to arise as to the nature of the phenomenality of the sheaths as contradistinguished from the Atman, for it is seen that the former do not entirely vanish but manifest themselves even after one's attainment of spiritual insight. How, then, can they be said to be unreal? Well; we know that the water in a mirage appears to a person even after he becomes conscious that its water is illusory, and that a pot with its characteristic form, though it is nothing but clay in itself, continues to be seen, even if we know that there is no pot apart from clay. The five sheaths, thus, may be present to the sage even after he attains Self-knowledge, but this appearance will be like that of a burnt cloth—which has perceptibility but no substantiality. When the soul gets discriminated from the sheaths, it shines in its pristine glory of pure consciousness. It, then, does not require to be established by proof of any kind, for it knows itself as self-evident reality. The Atman is the presupposition of all proof. It is the unshakable and the final conclusion of the Vedanta that, as clay alone truly

endures after the name and form of the jar disappear, the eternal Atman alone survives even after the five sheaths are shaken off with the saving knowledge. Whoever knows thus is a knower of Brahman.

### States of Consciousness

In his exposition of the *Mandukya Upanishad*, Swami Sivananda gives the following account of the Jiva as constituted of certain states of consciousness (*Principal Upanishads*, vol. I, pp. 420-32):

The Jiva is the supreme consciousness appearing to undergo the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Waking is the condition where the consciousness is associated with external objects having a pragmatic existence for the Jiva. The experiences of the waking individual are made possible by the operation of nineteen powers that form the subtle body within. The auditory, the tactile, the visual, the gustatory and the olfactory senses; the vocal, the prehensile, the locomotive, the generative and the excretory organs; the five vital breaths, called respectively the Prana or the central energy, Apana or the down-going energy, Vyana or the circulating energy, Udana or the up-going energy and Samana or the equalising energy; the four provinces of the psychological organ, viz. the mind, the intellect, the ego and the subconscious;—these together are the building-bricks, as it were, of individual experience. The distinguishing feature of the waking consciousness is that its contents are physical objects. The nineteen principles become for the Jiva the means of the enjoyment of objects, as well as of the suffering of mortal life. Swami Sivananda



makes an opposite remark in regard to the waking condition of the Jiva: The Jagrat-Avastha or the wakeful state is the last in the evolution of the universe, but the first in the order of involution. The dreaming and the deep sleep states follow the wakeful one. This quarter (viz. the waking condition) is called the first with reference to experience, but not with reference to the order of evolution or creation. This is called the first, because all the other quarters are approached through this, and because from it the dream state and the deep sleep state are known. From a study of the waking state one will have to proceed to the study of dream and deep sleep. When we begin to analyse the universe for the sake of realising the Atman, we will have to deal with the wakeful state first, and understand the nature of the gross objects in the beginning. It is then that we can gradually enter the subtle and the causal nature of things (p. 422). The Jiva in the waking state goes by the names of Visva, Vijnanatma, Chidabhasa, Vyavaharika-Jiva, Karma-Purusha, etc.

Dream is the second quarter, where the Jiva is called the Taijasa, and where it is conscious of internal objects and works by means of similar nineteen avenues of knowledge and action. The objects of the dreaming consciousness are subtle in comparison with those of the waking state. The mind in dream creates various objects out of the impressions produced in it by the waking experiences. The mind can reproduce the whole of its waking life, through the force of Avidya, Kama and Karma. In the dream world the mind is the perceiver as well as the perceived. It creates objects without the help of any external means. It is the

condition during which the Taijasa-Atman, in association with the mind laden with the residual impressions of waking life, experiences sound and the other objects, created merely out of the impressions, for the time being. Here the external senses are at rest, there is only a manifestation of the knower and the known with affinities to things enjoyed in the waking condition. The Visva, its normal actions having ceased, reaches the state of Taijasa, which moves in the middle of the subtle nerves near the throat, and illumines by its lustre the heterogeneity of the dream world. The dream phenomena are nothing but the states of the mind alone, though the Jiva here considers the externality of experience as real. The dream world is objective only to the dreamer.

That is the state of deep sleep wherein the Jiva does not desire any object, nor see any dream. This third quarter of the Jiva is termed Prajna, whose sphere is ignorance, in which all experiences become one, which enjoys bliss and provides a key to the knowledge of the other two states. Sound and the other objects of sense are not felt here due to the cessation of the objectifying function of the mind. Even the ego is here at rest. There is only Avidya or the veil of nescience. The Visva and the Taijasa enter a temporary condition of oneness in Prajna. An analysis of dreamless sleep leads us to the recognition of the existence of the Atman in all the three states. The remembrance of sleep, when one returns to the wakeful state, indicates that the witness of the three states is one. This witness is the Atman. The bliss of sleep, however, is not to be confused with the bliss of the Atman. As the mind is in a state of quiescence,

due to the absence of desire and activity, it is wound up in sleep into an unconscious condition of absence of all pain and an unwitting proximity to the Absolute. Our impassioned craving for sleep, even if it may mean the rejection of all other pleasures of life, gives us an inkling of there being a positive bliss underlying it. As the state of sleep, though a negative one, is the causal condition of empirical life, a knowledge of the seeds of experience hidden in it would throw an immense light on the whole life of the individual, whose essential characters get temporarily dissolved in the body of Prajna.

As the soul in the state of waking, dream and sleep is called, respectively, Visva, Taijasa and Prajna, the Universal Soul animating the physical, the subtle and the causal universes is designated Virat, Hiranyagarbha and Isvara. The Virat, having entered the microcosmic gross body and having the Buddhi as its vehicle, reaches the state of Visva. Hiranyagarbha, having entered the microcosmic subtle body and having the Manas as its vehicle, reaches the state of Taijasa. Isvara, who is coupled with the Avyakta, having entered the microcosmic causal body and having Avidya as His vehicle, reaches the state of Prajna. In the macrocosm, Virat is the last manifestation of Isvara, while in the microcosm, Visva is to be considered the first manifestation of the Jiva. In a sense, the waking state of the Jiva forms a link between itself and the manifestations of Isvara. Hence in the waking state the Jiva is supposed to be at its best.

Fill a pot with the water of the sea, tie a rope to the neck of the pot, and immerse it in the sea. Though the water of the pot is one with the water of the sea, it appears to be

separate on account of the limiting adjunct, viz. the pot. When the pot is drawn out by means of the rope, the water of the pot gets differentiated. But the ether, which is contained in the pot and is also outside it, forms a single homogeneous whole, and cannot be distinguished thus. Even so, the pot of the subtle body which is filled with the water of ignorance and to which is tied the rope of the impetus of past good and evil deeds, gets involved, in deep sleep, in a collective causal state, which is the adjunct of Isvara in the cosmic plane. With the individual ignorance, which is its own adjunct, the Jiva in dreamless sleep gets immersed in this vast sea of stillness. It appears to be discrete due to its containing in itself, potentially, the subtle body. When the Antaryamin, or the Inner Ruler, draws the rope of Karma, it gets differentiated, and comes back to the waking state. But the Atman remains a silent witness of the three states, as a support for the pot of the subtle body, which is the vehicle of individual ignorance.

The waking state may be compared to a big city, the dream state to the rampart or the walls of the fort of the city, deep sleep to the central palace within the city, and the Jiva to the king enthroned therein. The king comes out of his palace and moves about in the city, enjoys various objects and returns to his palace. The Jiva is subject to changes. It cannot be called the Witness-consciousness, because it dwindles in deep sleep. It is not real, for it is transcended in the Atman. It is only a reflection of Chaitanya in the Buddhi. The Atman is the real witness of the three states, even of the contingency of Jivahood. This

witness-state is called the Turiya or the fourth state of consciousness.

It is said that, as sweetness, liquidity and coldness, which are characteristics of water, appear as inherent in the waves, and then also in the foam, of which the waves form the background; existence, consciousness and bliss, which are the natural essences of the Atman, seem to inhere in the wakeful Jiva on account of its relation with the Atman. Likewise, these facets of the Atman are felt also in the dreaming self, by way of the impressions of the waking consciousness. And just as, on the disappearance of the foam, their characteristics, such as liquidity, revert to the waves, and, again, as with the subsiding of the waves in the sea, these exist in the waters of the sea as before; so existence, consciousness and bliss manifest themselves and shine in the waking consciousness after the disappearance of the dreaming state; and then, again, on the dissolution of the waking phenomena in the Atman, these eternal natures are experienced in the Atman, which is the highest reality. In Moksha, or the final liberation of the soul, when all objective perception is overcome in the consciousness of Brahman, even the character of being a witness drops from the self, and it realises its majestic independence.

Sometimes the states of consciousness are regarded as being sixteen in number. "There are sixteen states of consciousness. They are made up as follows: There are the four primary states of consciousness, called Jagrat, Svapna, Sushupti and Turiya (waking, dreaming, deep sleep and the Witness-consciousness). These, by differentiation, multiply into sixteen states. These are Jagrat-Jagrat (waking in

waking), Jagrat-Svapna (waking in dreaming), Jagrat-Sushupti (waking in sleep), Jagrat-Turiya (waking in super-consciousness), and so on with the remaining three other states. These sixteen states, by further differentiation, become two hundred and sixty-six states. These, again, by the differentiation of the phenomenal and the noumenal, become five hundred and twelve states. To realise these states of consciousness, it is very difficult, and is not possible for everyone.” “That is called Jagrat-Jagrat, in which there are no such ideas as ‘this’ or ‘mine’ regarding visible things. The great ones call that Jagrat-Svapna in which all ideas of name and form are given up. This is preceded by the realisation of the nature of Satchidananda. In the state of Jagrat-Sushupti, there is no idea but Self-knowledge. In Jagrat-Turiya the conviction becomes firm that the three states—gross, subtle and causal—are false. In Svapna-Jagrat there comes the conviction that even the activities proceeding from the astral plane, owing to causes set in motion previously, do not bind the self, when the knowledge of the physical plane is destroyed. In Svapna-Svapna there is no seer, seen and sight, when the Karana-Ajnana (ignorance which is the root of all) is destroyed. It is Svapna-Sushupti where by means of increased subtle thinking, the modifications of one’s mind get merged in knowledge. That is Svapna-Turiya, in which the innate bliss (pertaining to the individual self) is transcended by the attainment of universal bliss. That state is called Sushupti-Jagrat in which the experience of Self-bliss takes the shape of universal intelligence through the rising of the corresponding mental modifications. In Sushupti-Svapna

one identifies oneself with the modifications of the mind which has long been immersed in the experience of inward bliss. When one attains oneness of knowledge (Bodhaikya), which is above these mental modifications and above the realisation of any abstract condition, one is said to be in Sushupti-Sushupti. In Sushupti-Turiya, Akhandaikarasa (the one undivided essence of bliss) manifests itself, of its own accord. When the enjoyment of the Akhandaikarasa is natural in the waking state, one is said to be in Turiya-Jagrat. Turiya-Svapna is difficult of attainment; it is a state in which the enjoyment of Akhandaikarasa becomes natural even in one's dreaming condition. The still higher state of Turiya-Sushupti is even more difficult of accomplishment. In this state, the one undivided essence of bliss manifests itself to the Yogi, even in deep sleep. The highest state is Turiya-Turiya, wherein Akhandaikarasa disappears like the dust of the clearing nut (Kataka) used for clearing water. This is the Arupa or the formless state and is beyond cognition" (*Vedanta in Daily Life*, pp. 211-14). The Kaivalyopanishad says that the states of consciousness are appearances of one Brahman, and that one who knows this is freed from all bonds (Verse, 17).

### **Analysis of Dream**

A study of dream is now generally regarded as essential in all investigations of the human personality, for dreams are known to form a kind of index to one's inner constitutions and also to indicate certain possibilities of experience. Usually, four classes of dream are distinguished: Dreams due to (1) physiological disorders, (2)

psychological excitations and projection of desire and will, (3) contact of superhuman beings or astral spirits, and (4) the fruition of one's good and bad deeds. Another type of classification distinguishes between seven kinds of dream: (1) Dreams of objects seen, (2) dreams of objects heard of, (3) dreams of objects felt, (4) dreams of objects wished for, (5) dreams caused by imagination, (6) dreams which foreshadow future events, and (7) dreams which are caused by disordered bodily functions, such as those brought about by wind, bile, phlegm, indigestion, and other disturbed conditions of the body.

Dreams are regarded as phenomena caused when the mind functions in the Svapnavaha or Hita-Nadi. Though disconnected from external sense-perceptions, the mind is somewhat connected here with the tactile sense. When it withdraws itself from its connection even with the tactile sense, it enters the Puritat-Nadi, and experiences deep sleep. The stimulation of the Manovaha-Nadi, or the nerve-current through which the mind externalises itself, is said to cause dreams of a prognostic character, especially indicating diseases or death. The Manovaha-Nadi is the channel of the activation of the seat of the mind in the brain, by consciousness. The sensations received from outside are transferred to the seat of the mind in the brain, and from there these sensations receive the impact of consciousness by means of the Manovaha-Nadi. It is this enlivening of sensations by consciousness that makes possible any determinate perception. The Svapnavaha does the same function as the Manovaha, it being only a section of the latter.



Swami Sivananda presents a detailed analysis of the dream phenomena and throws some light on certain questions raised by the modern theory of psychoanalysis (*The Divine Life*, vol. IX, pp. 127, 175):

According to Sigmund Freud, dreams indicate a process of wish-fulfilment. Dream is said to be caused by suppressed desires. The physical stimulus alone is not enough or responsible for the production of dreams. The dream mechanism is very intricate, and the wishes are of a complex nature. They clamour for satisfaction, and do not die before self-expression and fulfilment. They are revolting to the moral self, which seeks to exercise a control over their appearance and activity. The wishes, therefore, emerge in several disguised forms, by means of defence-mechanisms, to evade the moral censor. Very few dreams present the wishes as they really are. They provide a partial gratification of unfulfilled desires. Often, their function is to become safety valves to strong impulses, and relieve mental tension. The animal self is visualised in dream.

The Freudian theory of dreams is apt to associate almost every kind of dream with the sex-urge, try to interpret every dream-object in terms of the sex-impulse, and carry this process to a sort of extreme. This tendency is evidently the result of a failure to take into account many important factors, besides sex, in the make-up of the individual, and the direction of evolution through successive cycles to the present human state. To the Freudians, man is mainly a psychical creature formed of urges, instincts and wishes buried unfulfilled in the unconscious mind. As the need for a permanent self is not

felt, the question of reincarnation does not arise. This is just the essence of the empirical view of life, that what is observed through the senses and the mental apparatus is considered to be ultimately real, and nothing beyond it is recognised to exist. The more considered view, however, is that man, in reality, is a spiritual being, expressing himself through the medium of a mind that has the physical body as its objective counterpart to function upon the gross plane of the senses. The true Self of man is devoid of sex, and even of personality and individuality. It is the body influenced by a state of mind that suffers under the tyranny of gender. The body is the least part of man as envisaged and defined by true philosophic wisdom. Sex is just but one aspect, though a dominant one, perhaps, of a living being stationed in a sense-world.

That unconscious desires relating to sex appear as objects in dream is not the whole story. The waking experiences are often retained in the subconscious and unconscious minds in the form of a memory or impression. The unconscious is, in fact, the storehouse of such potentialities of memories and impressions formed in one's waking life, through aeons. It need not mean that the unconscious contains impressions of experiences which one has gathered in this life alone. The unconscious is the reservoir of unmanifested impressions of experiences undergone in several previous lives. Only a part of this store is expressed or given out for experience in a single bodily life.

The factors of sex-impulse, repressions and activities during waking hours are not exhaustive in their nature.

Impulses arising out of the sum total of the impressions of experiences of previous incarnations also, at times, provide material for dreams. That portion of the results of one's actions allotted for being worked out in the present incarnation alone gets consciously expressed here in thought and action. Though, generally, the major part of this allotment is worked out in the form of pain and pleasure in one's waking life, it is not unusual for a measure of it to be repaired in the shape of dream experiences. The dream life is as vital and real, while it lasts, as the waking one. Many a time, certain serious and extremely painful experiences that one has to undergo in waking life become averted by being lightly undergone in dream. This is particularly so in the case of fortunate devotees and aspirants of truth, who have surrendered themselves to God, or taken shelter under a godly man as a preceptor, and have generated in themselves a tremendous Sadhana-Sakti, or a power of the spirit within, through self-restraint and meditation. The working of Grace and the power of Sadhana react upon the aspirant by shielding him from the too violent repercussions of his past deeds, by enabling him to pay off certain of his old debts in the form of some similar experiences in dream. This method is employed due to a mysterious peculiarity of the dream-consciousness, in which lengthy periods of time (in terms of the waking consciousness) can manage to get packed into the short space of a single night's, nay, a single hour's dream.

Thus, apart from the merely physical and the occult, deeper spiritual laws seem to have a part in the making of an individual's dream. The Sadhana performed by a person

in past lives makes him qualified and destined to obtain the guidance of a certain saint in his present incarnation. Though separated by thousands of miles, or thousands of years, the aspirant may be enabled, when the appointed time for their spiritual union approaches, to find out, through a graphic and insistent dream, the whereabouts of his would-be teacher, and through this unmistakable dream-guidance, enable the aspirant to reach his hallowed feet. The dream consciousness plays, many times, a very important role in influencing, moulding and determining one's activities in the waking life. This shows that it is not always that dream is merely a reproduction or image of waking life. There are instances of Svapna-Siddhas, i.e., aspirants who were shown the way to perfection by means of dream. These phenomena go to prove that deeper forces and factors operate, than merely the suppressed or repressed animal instincts of the individual. But these phenomena can hardly be comprehended properly by the merely science-ridden mind wedded to an empirical observation of things that are truncated from the essential consciousness and its implications. The dream of a spiritual aspirant who has a genuine longing for the salvation of his soul, and who intensely strives in the right direction towards the achievement of that end, is of a unique character, and cannot be compared with the process of wish-fulfilment or even with a mere reproduction of waking events. Such dreams have a supermental significance.

There are some dreams that are definitely prophetic in their nature. They keep the dreamer forewarned of

approaching diseases, calamities or bereavements. This feature of certain dreams has been established beyond doubt by countless concrete cases, a feature that has nothing whatsoever to do with sexual expressions or submerged anti-social elements. Again, besides forewarning, simple forecast is also effected, at times, in dream. The reason for this is that certain elements in the mental consciousness connected with the future event have begun to rise in that consciousness at the time of the dream. Cases are recorded where a person dreams vividly of certain sceneries, places and objects as distinguishing landmarks in a place. Several years later, quite unexpectedly, the person happens to come across the actual place, which, to his astonishment, he finds tallying even in the minutest details with the scene observed by him in dream, years before. In addition to this, the countless millions of subtle ethereal records embedded in the vast scroll of elemental space operate, sometimes, as direct causative factors in dream. It is not uncommon for a person happening to spend a night at some sacred place of hoary religious tradition or some historical place marking the spot of great and stirring events in the dim past, to dream of objects, persons and occurrences connected with the place, though he may be totally unaware of any such thing as ever existent or possible. This comes about due to the impact of the powerful ethereal impressions teeming at that place upon the consciousness of the person sleeping there. We have to take special note of a phenomenon like this, for here we have a purely objective factor giving rise to dream,

demonstrating the error of laying too much emphasis upon a purely subjective causation of the dream process.

It is possible, again, for close friends, relatives or twins to influence the dreams of each other. It is quite common for a person to have a dream of any extreme danger or pain that his friend or relative or twin is undergoing at that time. We have instances where a person upon death bed appears in dream to a friend at a great distance, apprises him of his departure, and bids him farewell. There are also cases where a person long dead appears in dream to someone connected with him when alive, and urges him to do some particular work. This astral being keeps on appearing in successive dreams until the person thus visited accomplishes satisfactorily the purpose indicated. All these are irrespective of the dreamer's temperament, predisposition, personal sexual life, early impressions, repressed desires, etc. (*Vide, Ibid. pp. 175-77*).

Certain kinds of external sounds, such as the ringing of a bell, the noise of alarm clocks, knocks on the door or the wall, the blowing of wind, the drizzling of rain, the rustling of leaves, the sound of the horn of a motor car, the creaking of the window, etc., may produce in the mind of the dreamer a variety of imagination. These generate certain sensations which increase in intensity according to the sensitiveness of the mind of the dreamer. The sounds may cause very elaborate dreams. If one touches the dreamer's chest with the point of a pin, he may dream that someone has given him a severe blow on his body, or stabbed him with a dagger (*Ibid. p. 128*). Medical men opine that an organic disturbance in the system, especially in the

stomach, can cause dreams, and even indicate the coming of a disease. Indigestion also becomes often a cause for several kinds of dream. A patient suffering from heart disease may dream of death under painful conditions. One who has lung disease may dream of suffocation. Intense pain in the teeth may cause the dream of dropping of teeth. It is not also quite unusual for a person whose system in the state of sleep feels a necessity to micturate to dream of swimming in a river or an ocean, or for one suffering from flatulence to dream of flying in the air.

Freud tries to establish his theory of wish-fulfilment in dreams by observation and analysis, which, he thinks, show that the dream content is not merely a translation of latent potency, but is reinforced by an unconscious wish, to fulfil which the content of the dream is transformed. He also advances an additional argument that the residuum of impressions of waking life cannot find expression in dream without the aid of the unconscious drive. Desires supply the impulse to manifest the impressions of waking. To what extent these assertions can be correct we have already noticed in our observations of the different phenomena that act as causes of dream. Freud often starts with what he wishes to prove. He is intent on discovering a wish behind dreams; and when one is not discovered there, the analysis is thought to be incomplete. Often, when we search for a thing in the mind, it is found there.

The mind in the waking state manifests only certain prominent aspects of the reservoir of the unconscious. The subconscious, too, is a partial manifestation of the deep unconscious. The waking and the dreaming states are

regarded as expressions of the consequences of the deeds to be worked out in this particular life. In this respect, these states may be considered not as experiences of original conditions but of reflections of experience or reproductions of forces that are buried in the deepest recesses of the unconscious. But what is the unconscious made of? It is constituted of unmanifest impressions and latent tendencies given rise to by past conscious acts. Thus the unconscious in the individual plays a double role: it is the result of past desires and actions, and also the cause of future desires and actions. Originally, it was caused by deliberate psychological acts and volitions, but in the course of countless lives which the individual undergoes, it continues doing newer and newer actions, due to fresh desires cropping up on account of attachment to individuality in every one of its incarnations, and thus adds fresh impressions to the old stock of the unconscious. The result is that the potential forces of the unconscious become so strong that they begin even to direct the course and determine the nature of future actions. This is the tragedy of individual life, that every new conscious action produces fresh impressions that are added on to the unconscious, thus enabling it to have a powerful hold on the destiny of the individual. The misery of bodily existence begins first with conscious acts, and then it becomes the consequence of the incessant surge of unconscious forces hidden behind visible causes. Man is, accordingly, free as well as bound.

Dreams occur in the Manomaya-Kosa or the mental sheath. The functions of the mind are chiefly thoughts of objects. Emotions, feelings, desires, and the like, are natural



to the mind, which works in coordination with the Pranamaya-Kosa or the vital sheath. During dreams, the mental sheath acts as a screen on which the pictures of forms are thrown by the impressions lying deep in the Annamaya-Kosa or the bliss-sheath, and the Vijnanamaya-Kosa or the intellectual sheath functions partially, and due to a hazy and dull manifestation of consciousness therein, it gets deprived of its power of volition and proper discrimination. The Atman is the witness of the play of the five sheaths, but the Jiva actually feels the vibrations and activities of the sheaths due to its self-identification with them. In waking, the whole of the intellectual sheath is lighted up and becomes active, but only a very weak part of it is active in dream, it being clouded by Tamas or inertia. A set of impulses which could not have free play in the waking life, because of the operation of the discriminative intelligence, is drawn out by a stimulus of a like character, when the power of discrimination fails and the mind begins to work independent of the senses by means of impressions of waking consciousness alone. The result is that we have a dream. Under these circumstances, there comes about a displacement of emphasis from the proper objective to an unimportant element. When dreams of a shocking nature are cast on the mental screen, the whole system, unable to bear them, awakes, and puts a stop to the dream.

Along with the projection of impressions, the rays of consciousness from the Atman, also, travel and illumine the play of the imagery in dream. These rays, while passing on to the mental sheath, have necessarily to pass through the intellectual sheath, but they are not strong enough to

illumine the whole of the sheath on account of the intellect then being dominated by Tamas. This leads to the diminution of the dreamer's discriminative sense, and to experiences that are not in conformity with the characteristics of objects usually seen by the waking mind. But one does not dream anything that one has not placed in the Anandamaya-Kosa, sometime or the other, except, of course, in the case of dreams which are caused by factors outside the individual's mind.

It is also possible for a dreamer to remain cognisant, during his dream state, of the fact that he is dreaming. This phenomenon takes place very rarely, but, nevertheless, it is a fact. Philosophers and saints have compared this type of dream with the condition of a person in waking life, in whom the spiritual consciousness has risen to its heights and enables him to recognise the unreality of the waking world in the light of the Absolute Truth. By constant practice it is possible for one to remain a witness even of dream phenomena, as it is possible for the perfected ones to be witnesses of the long dream of world-existence. If one trains oneself to remain detached from one's thoughts in the waking state, it would also be possible for one to exercise this control over experiences even in dream. It is not impossible to be aware sometimes, even in dream, that the dream is only a dream. One can alter, stop or create one's thoughts independently, even in the dream state, provided the practice of such control in the waking state is sufficiently strong. Intense meditation on the independence of the conscious Self will enable one to keep awake even in dream. If there is perfect self-discipline in waking, it would

be there in dream, too. The liberated soul or the Jivanmukta makes no difference between the essential features of dream and waking. To the Yogi who has successfully risen above the three states, experience is a continuous process of consciousness, spiritual and indivisible. The Jnani, with his intuitive perception, identifies himself with the Atman that runs like a thread through all the states.

That the Freudian analysis of dream is defective has been pointed out by several psychologists and philosophers of note. Wilhelm Stekel of Vienna, after quoting a passage from Freud to the effect that dream is a sinking back of the person into the intrauterine state, remarks: "This one example from Freud's latest work is enough to show the one-sided character of his conception of dreams. The dream is and remains for him a wish-fulfilment. Into this Procrustean bed of wish he wedges in every dream. Thus he neglects altogether the telepathic dreams which do not happen to fit in with his theory. He does not believe in telepathic dreams. But he brushes aside also all other dreams, which we must recognise as denoting warning or anxiety, as well as the dreams which we may call 'instructive.' Anxiety is always for him the sign of a repressed wish. But knowing that the dream portrays the eternal warfare between craving and inhibition, the struggle of man with himself under his dual aspect as the heir of primordial instincts and as the representative of culture, we must look upon the dream as a picture of both sides of the combat, a dramatisation in which the cravings as well as the inhibitions find pictorial representation, and in which even foreign thoughts may crop out through telepathic means. If

one sees only the cravings, one may be easily led to the erroneous conception which I myself have held for a time, that the dream is merely a wish-fulfilment. For, back of every wish there always stands some craving: the sexual instinct, the nutritional instinct, the craving for power, for self-aggrandisement, etc. But if we investigate the inhibitions, we find back of them also the influences of culture: warnings, preparations for the future, foreshadowings, religiosity and moral restrictions of every kind." Stekel concludes that sleep means re-experiencing one's past, forgetting one's present, and pre-feeling one's future.

Psychologists have also extended the features characterising dreams to fairy tales, folk stories and myths of the different races. The myth is considered to be a folk dream and to contain in a cryptic symbolic language an expression of the unconscious wish-excitations and fulfilment-hallucinations of the folk mind. Just as dreams disclose the secret thoughts and imaginations of the individual man, myths are supposed to disclose in unmistakable manner the ideals and wishes of the people. Carl Jung of Zurich posited a collective or racial unconscious, in addition to the personal unconscious. He discovered in this universal unconscious archetypes of experience which dream imagery and phantasy, myths and fables draw upon. He held that the presence of such a collective unconscious accounts for certain universally persistent symbols and modes of thought and imagination in the literature and practices, beliefs and behaviours of the people of several nations. He says: "The collective

unconscious is the sediment of all the experience of the universe of all time, and is also an image of the universe that has been in the process of formation for untried ages." This, he thinks, explains the phenomenon that the matter and themes of legends are met with all the world over in identical forms. The impressions of the thoughts and feelings of different persons that have lived since ages are said to be potentially and partially present in the structure of the brains of those who live today. Certain fundamental processes of thinking and feeling are held to be remarkably similar to all nations in the world. Dreams and myths, fairy and folk tales are considered to present the same kind of psychic structure. Such arguments as these are advanced to establish a racial or collective unconscious. The dreams of the individual, therefore, are said to be much influenced by the contents of this collective unconscious, apart from other factors peculiar to the individual and its environment.

It is also held that certain objects seen in dream can be inhabitants and features of spheres different from the one in which the dreamer lives during his waking life. Gaudapada thinks that the phenomena experienced in dream are Sthani-Dharmas or conditions of a region which is subtler than the one in which the waking individual lives. There are others who opine that dream is a connecting link between two realms of being, the physical and the super-physical. The fact, however, seems to be that dreams, in general, are mental images less clear in the quality of awareness, though in the framework in which they appear they are indistinguishable from waking life. The pattern of experience in waking and dream is the same. Space, time,

objects and causal relation are common to both the states, though they belong to different orders when compared with each other. The 'seen' is always outside the seer, and the two are related to each other by an objective process of knowing. A study of the relation between dream and waking gives us a clue to the knowledge of the relation between man and God.

### **Free will and Necessity**

If Brahman is the only reality, if Isvara is universal being, the freedom of the Jiva can only be conditional, and not absolute. Freedom of choice in the Jiva is relegated to the appearances that constitute the world, and effort becomes a process of the transmission of the impetus of universal activity through an ego. The force of the universe, as the Will of God or Isvara, causes an all-round evolution of things in space and time. As the universal Will is supreme, it may be said that there is an eternal determinism of the scheme of creation, preservation and destruction. But this universal Will acts not merely in the objective physical universe, but also in the subjective mental states. When the mind is endowed with the consciousness of personality and individuality, it receives the vibration of the cosmic Will through the medium of the constituents of its personality. The light that passes through a coloured glass seems to acquire the colour of that glass. The unique nature of the individual is self-centredness. Limitation to body, desire for objects, and intense self-respect are certain traits of this notable state. The universal Will, when it passes through the prism of individuality, appears to imbibe these strange

attributes which the mind arrogates to itself, of its own accord. In this process, the mind, instead of realising that the impulse for activity which it feels within itself is but the ingress of the universal into its individual processes, commits an error in yielding to the dictates of the ego and assuming for itself the role of a real agent, a doer and an enjoyer. When this impulse is deliberately associated with the ego, it goes by the name of effort actuated by a felt free will. Thus it becomes clear that free will and effort are names given to the manner in which the cosmic Will is erroneously received through the medium of the personal ego and attributed to it as a reality.

Effort, however, can be rightly directed—as it is actually done by all spiritual aspirants—when it is illumined by the light of the higher understanding. When the whole personality is lighted up by the higher knowledge, the ego begins to act by accepting its guidance. Here comes about the peculiar joint action of the ego, which assumes the role of agency, and the superior knowledge, which directs the individual beyond itself. As far as effort, as such, is concerned, it is to be considered as a result of mistaking the action of the universal impetus for individual power, but, when this effort moves in the direction of contemplation on the Divine Being, it becomes a process of self-purification and spiritual enlightenment. All other forms of effort are misdirected in different degrees, and lead to bondage and pain, ultimately. We have to distinguish between the lower effort of the ignorant Jiva and the higher one of the wise Sadhaka. The higher effort causes in the end a cessation of all personal initiative in the experience of Reality. Rightly

directed effort aims at liberating the Jiva gradually from the false notion of its being an independent agent in the performance of actions. The solution of the problem of the relation of free will to necessity lies in our recognising that individual freedom is but the consciousness of the way in which the Absolute is envisaged by temporal processes.

The question of the freedom of the soul is an agelong one. "Spinoza thought that our actions and experiences are in actual fact determined by a sort of mathematical necessity, like that of a wheel in a machine, but that we feel ourselves free if we enjoy doing what actually we are doing under compulsion; a stone in the air, he said, would think itself free if it could forget the hand that had thrown it. Or, to take a more homely illustration which is not Spinoza's, I know that I choose jam-roll because I like it and I feel myself free in so choosing because I do not stop to think that my liking is the inevitable result of my inheritance and upbringing, of the present state of my health and of my sugar metabolism, and of all sorts of things which it is quite beyond my power to change at the moment. Hegel and, at a later period, Alexander, held very similar opinions. Kant thought that we feel ourselves free just in so far as our actions appear rational to us; if I rationally run downstairs to welcome a friend, my action seems free to me; but if I run downstairs irrationally because I am afraid of a ghost, it will seem to me that I acted under compulsion" (*James Jeans: Physics and Philosophy*, pp. 206). It is the condition of the mind that finally determines whether an action is done with freedom of will or under the stress of necessity and force. Freedom in this world is really the individual's



consciousness identified with a particular action or group of actions under consideration, with an unconsciousness of the fact that these actions are but bits of the process of the universe directed by the laws of the Absolute. When the impersonal law gets translated in terms of a conscious individuality which is inseparable from a sense of personal agency, it goes by the name of free will and self-effort.

What we call our freedom is, according to Plotinus, simply the power of obeying our true and essential nature. True freedom does not belong to the appetitive side of human nature, to our desires or to our passions, for it is seen that these impulses restrict the freedom of man in acting otherwise than as they direct. Plotinus holds that complete freedom is not given to us as long as our desires are prompted by finite needs. The connection of our consciousness with the material body makes us dependent on the general laws of the physical world, over which we, as individuals, have no control. The individual is a complex structure, it partakes of elements that are subjected to necessity and also a principle whose essential nature is freedom. We may be individuals, and, as such, under compulsion to obey Nature; but we are also, as persons, each of us a whole. Though as parts we are all determined, as wholes we are free. The highest freedom belongs to the Absolute, and we are ultimately not different from it, and thus enjoy freedom in the real sense. The whole is present in every part, and the part is free to the extent to which the whole is manifest in it. "We are, therefore, not merely cogs in a great machine; we are the machine itself, and the mind which directs it." The soul which has perfectly realised its

inner essential nature is perfectly free. "The imperfect man is pulled and pushed by forces which are external to himself, just because he is himself still external to his true Being." Though the law of cause and effect operates everywhere inviolably and determines the movement of everything, we as self-conscious spirits are 'ourselves causative principles.' The principle of freedom in us is in the innermost Spirit that we all are, for the Spirit cannot be determined by any cause outside itself. Freedom is "the will of the higher Soul to return to its own Principle. The element of freedom in our practical activities is this underlying motive, the spiritual activity of the Soul." When the individual receives enlightenment, its will enjoys freedom. The will then becomes a good will, and the attainment of its desire is tantamount to spiritual perception, the perception of the glory of the Spirit which is absolutely free. Freedom is the principle of abiding by the laws of the Absolute, which is our own Self (*Vide, W.R. Inge: The Philosophy of Plotinus, Vol. II, pp. 183-84*).

The freedom that the ordinary man speaks of is an apparent freedom to will certain things and to act in certain ways, but he does not consider whether he has freedom to will what he will, or whether he has knowledge as to why he should will in a particular manner at all. That a man thinks he is free cannot be offered as a proof that he is really free, for it has been observed that a subject under hypnosis carries out a train of activity, suggested to him under hypnosis, and, after awakening from the hypnotic state, gives reasons of his own when asked to explain why he acted in that way. Since the hypnotist knows the real reason

behind the subject's actions, and since this motive or reason differs from the one which the subject offers, it has been suggested that the reasons for our actions can be different from what we believe them to be, and that this indicates the existence and operation of unknown forces. We feel we are free because we are aware only of our present volitions and not of their real causes. It is our limitation to self-consciousness that makes us feel we are free. This has led psychologists to throw overboard free will altogether, and assume an unconscious realm of the psyche as the sole determinant of all conscious behaviour. Our thoughts and desires are said to be expressions of the unconscious, only certain aspects of which are allowed to enter the surface of consciousness. The so-called freedom of the individual is thus threatened by the control which the unconscious impulses have on the conscious life of man. "If, in short, consciousness is rightly regarded as a by-product of unconscious processes, it is clearly determined by the processes which produce it. Conscious events are merely the smoke and flame given off by the workings of the subterranean psychological machinery of which we are unconscious" (*C. E. M. Joad: Guide to Philosophy, p. 238*). The instincts and impulses are held by psychoanalysts to be the mainspring of all individual action. Even the unselfish actions or desireless activities of man are supposed to be driven by instincts over which he has no control, and of which he has no knowledge. Even the intellect is dubbed as a mere rationalisation of inner urges. Intellectual activity and ratiocinative processes are classed as operations of irrational instincts in the plane of objective consciousness.

Human life is depicted as a striving of the impulses to seek satisfaction in the achievement of their particular ends. These findings of Depth-psychology have, no doubt, an element of truth in them; but they do not give us the whole truth.

The human soul is a finite reproduction of God, and so it shares to some extent in the freedom of God. This freedom may be relative, as the individual is limited by the forces of Nature (physical laws), by its relations to the other souls (social laws), and by the absoluteness of God (Divine law). But man is free in proportion as his consciousness is in approximation to God, and is determined in proportion as he is finite and self-conscious in opposition to an object in space and time.

Swami Sivananda's views on self-effort and necessity may be stated as follows (*The Divine Life*, Vol. XIV, pp. 36-38):

An animal that is tethered to a peg by a rope of a given length has freedom to move within the circle drawn by the radius of that rope. But it has no freedom beyond that limit; it is bound to move within that specified range. The position of man is somewhat like this. His reason and discrimination afford him a certain amount of freedom which is within their scope. But the reasoning faculty is like the rope with which the animal is tied. It is not unlimited, and is circumscribed by the nature of the forces which govern the body through which it functions. As long as man has consciousness of personality, or even individuality, and insofar as it is within his capacity to exercise the sense of selective discrimination, he is responsible for what he

does; he is an agent or doer of the action, and such actions as these are fresh actions or Kriyamana-Karmas, for they are connected with the sense of doership. But if events occur when he is incapable of using this power of understanding, as, for example, when he is not in his body-consciousness, or when things happen without his conscious intervention in them, he is not to be held responsible for the same, for these are not fresh actions but only the fruition of a previous deed or deeds. Though every experience bears, to some extent, a relation to unknown forces, its connection with one's consciousness constitutes the meaning of a fresh action. Effort is nothing but consciousness of initiative as related to oneself, whatever be the thing that ultimately prompts one to do that action. It is not the action as such but the manner in which it is executed that determines whether it is a Kriyamana-Karma or not. A Jivanmukta's actions are not Kriyamana-Karmas, for they are not connected with any personal consciousness. They are spontaneous functions of the remaining momentum of past conscious efforts, which are now unconnected with the consciousness of agency. Experiences which are forced upon oneself or which come of their own accord, without the personal will of the experiencer involved in them as an agent, are not to be considered as real actions. An experience caused by mere Prarabdha does not cause another fresh result, but is exhausted thereby, while the Kriyamana-Karma tends to produce a fresh experience in the future, because it is attended by the sense of doership.

Sometimes, the causative factors of actions may manifest themselves, not through the consciousness of the experiencer, but through an external agency or occurrences having causes beyond human understanding. Even when a person is goaded by another to do an action, it is only an aspect of his deserts, in relation to the others, that works. In the state of spiritual realisation, such incitations cease. Efforts are automatically stopped on the rise of Self-knowledge, which is the goal of all effort, and not before that. As long as there is body-consciousness and world-consciousness, man will not perforce continue exerting himself to achieve his desired end. The consciousness of effort is the natural concomitant of the consciousness of imperfection. Man, being what he is, continues, by his own nature, to put forth effort until he reaches his goal. The question of free will and necessity is a relative one, and it loses its meaning on the dawn of the wisdom of the Self.

### **Life After Death**

A study of the conditions of individuality enables us to ascertain the position of man in the universe. Jivahood is a state or phase, not permanent existence. It is a part of changing Nature. It is Avidya or ignorance that is the source of even logical knowledge. The highest power of the individual is Buddhi or the understanding, which is only a sprout rising from the hidden seed of Ajnana. The function of the Buddhi continues as long as Ajnana is not destroyed by Brahmajnana. Consciousness reflected in the Buddhi is the Jiva-Chaitanya, and this lasts even after the death of the physical body. The Jiva is the transmigrating soul passing

through the states of waking, dream and deep sleep, in different planes of life, until it attains salvation. The connection of the self with the Buddhi is dormant in deep sleep and death, but becomes active in the state of waking. The death of the body is not the extinction of the Jiva, but the casting off of a vesture that has served its purpose in a particular state of becoming. It is a process of changing the instrument of experience, nothing more. Birth and death are not just two events in one's life, but form links in the unending chain of transformation going on in the universe, whether one is aware of it or not in one's attachment to specific conditions. "The Jiva leaves the physical body here, goes to heaven to enjoy the fruits of its various actions with the help of the astral body, and comes back to this Mrityuloka (mortal world) when the Karmas are exhausted" (*Philosophy and Teachings*, p. 52).

In the different births that the individual takes, its subtle body persists, though the tendencies that give rise to the different forms of individuality vary in different lives. The individuality of the Jiva does not cease as long as the store of the impressions of all its past actions does not get exhausted by experience, or is burnt up by the fire of knowledge. The peculiar features of the personality assumed in each birth are determined by the nature of previous actions. Future births are also determined by present actions which are expected to bear fruit as experiences in newer bodies. The form of the Jiva is its limiting adjunct with which the Atman appears to be associated. The Atman is untouched by the changes of Jivahood, which is rooted in the varying conditions of

Avidya that gives rise to Kama and Karma. The subtle principles forming the subtle body continue to be associated with the Jiva, whatever be the nature of the birth it takes—human, superhuman or subhuman. Only, in superhuman forms of birth there is a greater expansion and subtlety of the Antahkarana (internal organ) and the senses, while in lower births they get contracted in accordance with the nature of the body which the soul happens to enter. The Antahkarana is really the centre of individuality. It is in conjunction with the subtle body of the Jiva that the Atman puts on the fictitious role of doer, enjoyer and sufferer, though it is free from such contingent natures. The misery of Samsara continues as long as this Adhyasa or the superimposition of false characters lasts.

The doctrine of creation is based on the eternity of consciousness. As consciousness can never originate or end, so its existence throughout the past must be conceived as repeated embodiment like the present birth. As the ultimate destiny of man is identity with God, he passes from one life to another, from body to body, according to his desires and actions, until he exhausts all experiences resulting therefrom, and attains identity with God. Reincarnation cannot stop until Self-realisation is attained, for the immortal Atman asserts itself every moment, and the individual cannot find rest anywhere except in such realisation, which, again, is not possible unless all Karmas are destroyed. Without the fundamental acceptance of the eternal Atman, no experience can be explained or understood, and the law of Karma is only a corollary to this basic truth, which is the pivot and central theme of



philosophy and religion. The function of the soul in evolution cannot be performed in one life alone. The mind has intimations of overstepping the limitations of space, time, causality and individuality. This cannot be realised now immediately. Memory of the past, anticipation of the future, conception of the remote and perception of the inner causes and relations of things beyond the ken of the senses show that the mind can transcend space, time and its concomitants. It cannot be bound to any single body, and so it flies from one to another in search of a perfected state of life.

In his work, *What Becomes of the Soul after Death*, Swami Sivananda states that life on earth is a halting place on the way to the achievement of the goal of life. Earthly life is transitory, for it is seen that everything born is doomed to die. But death is not the end of life, since without a continuation of life, the values of the deeds performed in this life would be rendered nugatory. There were births and deaths in the past, there will be births and deaths in the future, too, until Moksha is attained. Life is a long chain of which the recurring births, planary lives and deaths are links. Birth is caused by desires and actions. The present life is, therefore, meant to train the individual to qualify itself for a higher life, to stop birth and death ultimately. This life is not the goal or the end, even as the path is not the same as the destination. If earthly life were the final goal, none would have died here, there would not be mutation, pain and sorrow, and there would be no sense of imperfection anywhere, no further urge or aspiration to get beyond the present condition. Birth is inevitably followed by death, and

death by rebirth. As a man casting off worn out garments takes new ones, so the dweller in the body, abandoning worn-out bodies, enters others that are new.

The word reincarnation literally means ‘coming again into a body’, while transmigration signifies passing from one plane to another in the process of reincarnation. The doctrine of rebirth follows from the law of Karma. The differences of disposition which are found among individuals are traced to their respective past actions. Past actions imply past births, for we cannot say that the actions of the present body can be its cause. All actions cannot bear fruit in one life alone, and so there must be others for undergoing the results of the remaining actions.

The individual souls build various bodies to display their activities and gain experience in different worlds. They enter bodies and leave them when found to be unfit for habitation. Life flows on to achieve its conquest in the universal. Rebirth is negated in eternal life. The process of transmigration emphasises the immortality of the soul. The causes of death are many and indefinite. Man is ever in the jaws of death, which overtakes him suddenly, often when he is the least prepared for it. He ever thinks that he will escape death, and even if he realises the certainty of death, he expects it only at a distant date. Just as a mango, fig or a fruit of the *pipal* tree is detached from its stalk, the soul of man, detaching itself from the parts of the body, goes, in the way it came, to other bodies. The self that is identified with the subtle body dissociates itself from it and withdraws the vital force into itself. As it detaches itself from the body and the organs while entering into deep sleep, it

disconnects itself from the body at the time of death. As frequently as one moves from the dreaming state to the waking one, from the waking to the dreaming, and thence to deep sleep, does the soul transmigrate from one body to another. The Jiva adopts the whole universe as a means for the realisation of the fruits of its works and moves to different habitations for fulfilling this object. The universe implied by its works waits for it with the requisite means for this realisation of deeds made ripe for experience. Man is said to be born into the body that has been made for him by the shape and the constitution of the forces generated by his actions.

The fact of rebirth is also proved by the principle of the conservation of energy. Energy is either physical or it also includes the mental. If energy is only physical, the mind would ever remain distinct as something independent of matter, which would mean that it may continue after the death of the body. But if energy includes even mental energy, then, as physical energy is not absolutely lost but exists in some form or the other, so mental energy, too, cannot be lost even after the dissolution of the physical elements of the body. The soul is immortal. Further, if the universe is a perfect system of balanced forces and harmonious elements in it, it stands to reason that the individual, which is an essential factor in the evolution of the universe, and which forms an integral part of it, should exist as a centre of force, irrespective of the fact whether the body is visible or not. Moreover, our personal desires, ambitions and moral urges give us strong hints that we ought to exist even after the death of our body. The intellect

which is limited to operations in space and time ever struggles to overcome its boundaries in a boundless knowledge. If this is to be possible at all, if there is any meaning in one's ceaseless attempts to overcome barriers, then the essence of man cannot die with the death of the body or the destruction of the world. The ideals of morality and the desires of man are ever in conflict with each other. That the moral ideal has to overcome personal desires and that there should be a reconciliation of duty and desire, indicate that there is a future life, without which life would become meaningless.

The assertion of the 'I' in everyone is not confined to any particular individual, but is the eternal assertion of existence in common. This sense of the 'I' will exist as long as the universe lasts. It is the deathless will-to-live that affirms itself in this way in all beings. This 'I', again, is not a limited 'I', but a craving for the Infinite, associated with the I-consciousness. It has significance in the infinitude of the Self, in nothing short of the Absolute. Life can never end, and rebirth never stop, until Brahman is realised. The individuality of man is not his true nature but only an outward manifestation of it. It is phenomenon presented in the frame of time. The reality in man knows neither time, nor beginning, nor end, nor limitation. It is everywhere, in every individual, and no one can exist apart from it. When death comes, one is annihilated as a body; but there is continuance of life as a principle of individuality. The temporal man struggles to reach his eternal being.

Desire is the root-cause of transmigration. Being attached to desires, the soul obtains the results which its

subtle body or mind contemplates. Exhausting whatever works it did in this life, it returns to this world or another, for fresh work. Thus does man who desires transmigrate continuously. Rebirth is put an end to only by the absence of all desires. He who is free from desires, the objects of whose desires have been attained, and to whom all objects of desire are but the Self—his Pranas do not depart; being Brahman, he is merged in Brahman. To such a knower who has rooted out his desires, work will produce no baneful result. The scripture declares that for the one who has completely attained the objects of his desire in the realisation of the Self, all desires dissolve in this very life. But the man with desires prepares for his future birth by his present thoughts and feelings, and obtains whatever he thinks and feels at the moment of death. Therefore, in order to have freedom of action and thought at the time of departure from this world, aspirants who desire emancipation should be alert in the practice of Yoga and right knowledge, and in the acquisition of merits during their lifetime. By such practice the Jiva breaks through its bondage and attains supreme blessedness.

## **PART II: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOME WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It has been said that there is a radical difference between the Western and Eastern methods of approach in the pursuit of philosophy. Western philosophers are generally distinguished from the Eastern by their exclusively rationalistic approach to Truth, and in their paying not much attention to or even totally abrogating the claims of intuition. No doubt, there were some great mystics in the West, too, who proclaimed the possibility of and the necessity for an intuitional approach to Truth by transcending the realms of sense, understanding and reason; but, unfortunately, they are not regarded as regular philosophers and their teachings are looked upon with a certain amount of suspicion. This happens because of the curious argument that the super-rational has no place in philosophy proper. And there are those in India who think that an attempt to study and understand the methods and conclusions of the systems of the West is just energy misspent, holding as they do the view that the way of faith and intuition in philosophy is the only practicable, useful and trustworthy one. We need not, however, fully agree with these extreme propositions of the traditional conservatives on either side. Knowledge is neither Western nor Eastern, but universal. It is not true that Indian philosophers set aside reason as absolutely futile, though they point out its natural limits. There are certain schools in India which establish their systems purely on rational grounds, without, at the same time, discrediting the value

and need of intuition, in any way. The great philosopher, Sankara, who was an ardent adherent to authority and revelation, made full use of the powers of reason in founding his stupendous metaphysical system and said that the Vedanta is ornamented by the fact that its strength lies not merely in appealing to revelation but reason and experience also, adding, however, a note that unbridled reason which goes counter to revelation should be rejected as unhelpful. On a study of the history of philosophy in the West we come across variegated types of philosophers who made diverse approaches to the problems of life and established several schools of thought, which generally comprise vast fields of observation, investigation and research, such as logic, epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, psychology, axiology and mysticism. In modern times, however, the implications of discoveries in physical science have practically become a part of the study of philosophy. In our study, we may usefully turn to several of the methods employed by the great thinkers of the West, for a rigorous training of the mind before setting about forming categorical judgments on the nature of Truth. We have already observed that the philosophy of Swami Sivananda is characterised by an integrality in its meaning, method and scope, and it discards nothing as totally useless, though it accepts nothing without sifting it through the sieve of well-considered thought and experience born of intuition. It would certainly add to one's knowledge to make an analytical, critical and comparative study of the magnificent doctrines and discoveries of some of the great Western thinkers and of the Vedanta philosophy of Swami

Sivananda. The special feature of his interpretation of the Vedanta is that it is not opposed to any philosophical or speculative school, but accepts each at a particular stage in the evolution of the human consciousness.

We can safely commence with Immanuel Kant.



## CHAPTER XI: IMMANUEL KANT

Immanuel Kant is said to have been woken up by Hume from his 'dogmatic slumber' and brought about a 'Copernican revolution' in the field of philosophy. In Kant we begin to reap the ripe fruits of philosophy, for it is here that it shows signs of its having reached maturity and full development.

Kant discovers that neither empiricism nor rationalism is entirely correct, though each is partially true. His problem is therefore to take stock of the previous findings in philosophy and to construct his own critical philosophy or transcendental idealism. Kant begins by saying that knowledge is not completely derived from sense-experience. We cannot confine our knowledge to the senses, as Locke and Hume supposed. Hume committed the mistake of restricting experience to separate and distinct sensations, and from this false premise came to the false conclusion that there is nothing necessary or universal in knowledge. Sense-experience gives us only probabilities and not certainties. If there is a certain, necessary and universal knowledge, it must be independent of sense-experience. The necessity and universality about such knowledge is true even prior to sense-experience—it is *a priori*. We have in mathematics, for example, a knowledge which is necessary and universal; it is unaffected by what experience the senses may give us in the course of time. For never in the history of the world would an addition of seven and five cease to make twelve, and never have the principles of geometry been falsified in experience. Here is an instance of knowledge independent of sensations. Kant is here a

dogmatist, for instead of asking *whether* synthetic judgments *a priori* are possible, he takes for granted that there is already such knowledge, and concerns himself with *how* synthetic judgments *a priori* are possible. He is only fired with the zeal for describing the anatomy and demonstrating the working of such knowledge, and considers, as against Hume, that to deny a necessary and universal knowledge would be a mere 'scandal'.

Now, from where do we get such necessary and universal knowledge? Certainly not from sense-experience; for this knowledge remains independent of sense-experience. For Kant all knowledge is in the form of judgments. Genuine knowledge is a necessary and universal judgment. Sensations have nothing of the necessary or the universal in them. Hence genuine knowledge must be inherent in the very constitution of the understanding or mind itself, the very make-up of the mind, the necessary and fundamental law which determines the manner of all the functions of the mind. The mind is not a blank tablet as Locke thought, not a passive recipient of sensations, but an active agent which modifies the form of the sense-material, gives it a different shape, casts it in the mould of order, unity and method, and reorganises its constitution. So in our knowledge we have material from the senses, unity and order from the mind or the understanding. Without sensations or perceptions knowledge is empty; without thinking or understanding knowledge is blind. Kant puts his whole problem thus: How are synthetic judgments *a priori* possible in mathematics, physics and metaphysics?

The whole of his 'Critique of Pure Reason' is an attempt to answer this great question.

Kant observed that sensations by themselves are subjective states and have to be referred to space and time in order to acquire the character of objectivity in knowledge. Sensations provide matter, and space and time the form. In our processes of knowledge we first organise sensations by the application of the perceptual categories of space and time, and then again organise these perceptions by the application of the conceptual categories, the pure concepts and judgments, which are twelve in number. Sensations by themselves cannot give us knowledge; they have to get themselves arranged about an object in space and time, and then we say we have the perception of an object. Without the aid of space and time there can be no perception, for sensations independently give us no knowledge of any object. Space and time are the *a priori* modes or ways of perception, and can also by themselves become contents of *pure* perception independent of objects. They are *a priori*, because they are the conditions necessary for the formation of sensations into perceptions. And as the laws of mathematics are the laws of space and time, they are *a priori* laws.

According to the empiricists, perceptions are the results of a spontaneous grouping of sensations; but to Kant this is brought about by a purpose that is detectable in the mind itself, in the sensibility of the understanding. Kant rejects the views of Locke and Hume and concludes that the understanding plays an important part in the formation of perceptions. Yet, perceptions, distinct and separated,

cannot give us real knowledge. As the reformulation of sensations as perceptions is done by the application of the perceptual categories of space and time, so the perceptions are transformed into concepts by the application of the categories of the understanding. And as the sensations are grouped, arranged and united about objects in perception by means of the *a priori* laws of space and time, so perceptions are connected, related and organised by conceptions about the ideas of the categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality. The perceptions are cast in the moulds of these categories of the understanding and transformed into concepts and judgments. This becomes possible on account of the presence of a unifying consciousness or synthetic unity of apperception in us. The function as well as the essence of the understanding is this arrangement and organisation of sensations and perceptions. The connecting link between percepts and concepts is the time-form, which Kant calls the 'transcendental schema'. This order, this unity in sensations and perceptions is brought about by those laws inherent in the understanding or the mind itself, and not by the sensations themselves, as Locke and Hume thought. There is a tremendous organising capacity in the mind, and this capacity is *a priori*, independent of sense-experience. Kant recognises that the *things-in-themselves* cannot be the causes of this organised character seen in knowledge, for we affirm their existence only by inference from the scattered sensations that we receive from outside. The capacity for order and unity has to be attributed to the mind or the understanding alone. The differences that are observed in

knowledge possessed by different persons prove that order is brought into sensations not by the sensations themselves but by the *a priori* laws of the mind, which is an active judge or law-giver and not a piece of wax passively receiving impressions from outside. The laws and the ordered unity of the world are therefore the laws and the ordered unity of the categories of the mind. What we call things are not *things-in-themselves*, but the categories of the mind alone, objectified in space and time. In other words, we see in things only the necessary and universal laws of our minds. It is the necessary and universal laws of the mind that recognise themselves in the objects of the world. Kant saves the world of physics, as he saved mathematics.

The charge that is usually levelled against Kant that he teaches naive subjectivism is not justifiable. He does not say that any particular mind prescribes its laws to Nature, but he speaks of necessary and universal knowledge which, though confined to the categories of the mind or to the manner of perceiving things, is common to the minds of all men. But he makes the laws of things the laws of the human mind, though it may be that they are of all minds. The categories of our perception and conception, he says, control all knowledge and we can know nothing beyond them. Though sensations have to be supposed to be caused by certain things-in-themselves, these latter can never become objects of our knowledge, for our knowledge is limited to the categories. Kant here is in agreement with Locke in thinking that we cannot know things as such, though they have to be conceived to be the causes of our sensations. Kant, according to the Vedanta, is not correct in

supposing that the logical categories of the human mind can so modify or affect the constitution of our knowledge that we know only the logical categories and that what we call physical objects are only the objectifications of these categories of human thought. The Vedanta holds that the physical world is the manifestation of Isvara, and that the *existence* of objects is independent of human thinking and of its logical laws, though the human mind contributes much in determining the *value* of the objects by projecting on them its own desires, feelings and emotions. It may be true that certain desires, feelings and emotions are common to all mankind; yet this universality of certain psychological conditions cannot be made a factor that can affect the existence of the physical objects. Logic is not the same as metaphysics, if by logic we mean the laws of mere human thinking and reasoning. Human thinking is not a part of reality in the sense of cosmic existence. Only the mind or will of Isvara or God can have such reality and only the logic of this mind can be identical with the laws of a metaphysics of reality. And also it is only this cosmic mind that can modify the nature of the objects of knowledge by the categories or laws of its constitution. To the Vedanta the world is ideal in the sense that it is in the Idea of Isvara, but not in the idea of any man, or even in the ideas of all men. Again, space and time and the physicality and externality of the objects of the universe cannot be considered to be realities from the point of view of Isvara, for He is a spiritual Being, and the appearances of these, therefore, are to be understood as the necessary counterparts of the notion of our individual existence. The

physical world has an existence independent of human thinking or willing, but it becomes dependent on thinking and willing when the human mind rises above itself and gets identified with the Mind of Isvara. Thus the existence of the physical world appears to be and has to be accepted as independent of the human mind only so long as human individuality persists, and not when it is transcended in the Cosmic Mind. Again, the existence of the world as independent of the human mind and the existence of a Cosmic Mind of which it is a manifestation and whose laws determine its nature, are necessary postulates accepted to offer a consistent and satisfactory explanation of our experiences in the world. They are relative, for they are valid only in relation to the individual, and only so long as individuality survives. The world is relative because it is dependent on the categories of space, time and causation, which have validity only in relation to the individual, and are more real than the thoughts or imaginations of the individual as long as the individual exists as such, but which are dependent on and controlled by the laws of the Cosmic Mind. To express the problem concisely: As long as an individual exists, other individuals too exist, which are as much real as itself, and there is a physical world which is as much real as all the individuals, and so not dependent on their thoughts or laws of thinking; as long as this state of affairs continues, there is to be accepted the existence of a Cosmic Mind or the thought of God, which is the author of the physical world and of all the individuals in it, and which completely determines the nature of the world with its laws, i.e., this independence of the physical world over

individuals and thoughts, and this existence of the Cosmic Mind or the thought of God are necessary and unavoidable facts implied in individualistic experience. But when the individual mind is raised to the state of the Cosmic Mind, there would be neither the individual, nor the world; there would be only the Absolute-Experience. Ultimately, the world discloses its spiritual being. This explains in what way the world is independent or has extra-mental reality, in what way ideal or purely dependent on mind, in what way relative to the interaction of subject and object, and in what way non-existent. Here we see the glory of the Vedanta.

Kant recognises that though mathematics and the physical sciences are in conformity with the universal laws of thought and the system of logic, and so necessary and valid for every mind, this necessity and validity of theirs is limited to phenomena, and so they are relative. The world of sense-experience is an appearance; it does not consist of things-in-themselves, for they cannot be known, though they lie as the background of all phenomena. Some interpreters of Kant object to his assertion of the things-in-themselves as dogmatic, for when the things-in-themselves cannot be known at all, as Kant says, how can their existence be asserted? That the things-in-themselves exist, they think, is an unwarranted assumption contrary to Kant's theory that nothing that is known is more than an appearance. Even the things-in-themselves ought to be restricted to the categories of the mind, for it is the mind that asserts their existence. Others try to save Kant from this charge by holding that his concept of things-in-themselves does not make them known as realities, but it is



only a limiting concept which Kant has no objection to include within phenomena. The aim of this concept is only to point out the limits of possible knowledge or experience. But the Vedanta would go ahead of Kant as well as these critics of his and suggest to Kant himself that the things-in-themselves are not mere postulates or hypothetical suppositions as he would think, neither phenomena of the finite categories, nor even just limiting concepts, but intimations of a supermental reality, which Kant posited, even without his own knowing, through shades of a supersensuous intuition, and which he, by analogy from physical objects of perception, wrongly supposed to be many in number. Really there is only one Thing-in-Itself, the Eternal Spiritual Being, and not many things-in-themselves. Sometimes Kant even gives us a hint that the things-in-themselves are material objects, though their exact nature cannot be known by us, which would obviously be a lapse into the Lockian theory of representationism. How can we say that the objects are material when they are not known? Kant cannot make himself consistent unless he admits the thing-in-itself to be a spiritual essence, indivisible, and so infinite or non-dual.

Now Kant, with his theory of the categories and by limiting all knowledge to appearances, tries to give a deathblow to metaphysics, declaring with a hardened intellect that not only our knowledge of the objects of the world, but also our knowledge of soul and God is an appearance, a phenomenon of the categories of the understanding. Metaphysical knowledge is limited to phenomena, there can be no metaphysics of 'being as being'

or of the 'That which is'. All such metaphysics is involved in antinomies and paralogisms. Kant shows that we can prove that the world has a beginning in time, and also that it has no beginning in time; that a compound substance consists of simple parts, and also that it does not consist of simple parts; that there is freedom, and also that all things are determined; that there is an absolutely necessary being; and also that there is no such being. Reason cannot establish ultimate truths. We are caught in the grips of phenomenal experience from which we cannot extricate ourselves.

The greatness of Kant lies in that he has thoroughly investigated and grasped the powers and limits of reason, and knows to what extent reason can provide man with genuine knowledge. But his weakness is in that he stretches the functions of reason beyond their limits, to a province over which reason cannot have sway, and coming to the bitter decision that the things-in-themselves cannot be known, tried to floor all attempts to construct a metaphysics of reality. If Hume gave us scepticism, Kant appears to give us agnosticism. Both leave us in the same position as far as our knowledge of reality is concerned. Kant did not notice that his antinomies are not real contradictions but different perspectives, views of reality, all true at some time, at a particular stage in the development of the powers of our knowledge. Kant himself knows that this predicament in which we are landed by the antinomies is due to our falsely supposing that space, time and cause are external and independent of perception. When these forms of perception get identified with knowledge itself, in a manner different from that in which

Kant's categories are contained in the understanding, all these antinomies get resolved in a wholeness of perception which is supersensuous intuition. As it was already shown, the world is real for purposes of certain aspects of life, ideal for certain others, relative at some stage, and non-existent at another. These are not contradictions, but piecemeal views of reality given to the mind which cannot know it as a whole at one stroke. It may appear from an exclusively abstract point of view of the pure reason that our knowledge of reality is phenomenal, but we should say that this is merely an act of supererogation on the part of reason, and an untenable thesis. The effect cannot know its cause without its ceasing to be an effect. It is futile to know reality, as such, through the mind or the reason. Kant admitted this for a reason different from the one which the Vedanta gives. Kant limits experience to sense, understanding and reason, without caring to heed to their presuppositions; so he denies the possibility of a genuine metaphysics of reality. But to the Vedanta, experience does not consist merely in these; there is another faculty of knowledge on which these are based and without which these are meaningless, and which is in a position to build a sound metaphysics, comprehensive and satisfactory. This basis, this presupposition of all relative knowledge, is the soul, the self, the arguer, the doubter, the ground lying behind scepticism, phenomenalism and agnosticism, which is not a matter of doubt, not an appearance, not unknown.

The ideas of freedom and necessity, of the nature of causality and of a necessary being above the world, of an ultimate causeless cause, which for Kant are not above the

phenomena of the categories of the understanding, hinge upon the problem of self, of an immutable, incorruptible, immortal, simple, indivisible, spiritual substance or being. For Kant such a self is inconceivable, our concept of it is involved in phenomena, it is not above the finitising categories; hence the concepts of the world and God, too, who bear relations to the self, are phenomenal. Kant says that we know ourselves not as we are but as we appear to ourselves through the categories. We know the world not as it is, but as it appears to us through the categories. We know God not as He is, but as He passes through the mill of our understanding and reason. The world as such, soul, and God are all things-in-themselves and so exist beyond experience.

We cannot, however, charge Kant with the guilt of denying soul, world and God altogether; for what he seems to say is that these cannot be known through sensation, perception, understanding or reason; else there would be no meaning in his positing the things-in-themselves. But the trouble with him is that he would not accept that we have any other kind of experience than the sensuous and the mental. He has, no doubt, the genius to conceive of an intellectual intuition which, he says, if we could possess it, would enable us see things face to face, at once in their true essences. But he denies its reality and accepts it only as a probability; we have only sensuous intuition, we know nothing supersensuous. He denies an immediate intuition of even our own selves and makes the self an object of the discursive reason. His opinion is that one knows *oneself* but not *one's self*. He smacks of Hume when he says that what

we know of ourselves are only successive mental states, percepts, and nothing more. We have only a thought of self, not a perception of self, and this thought is a bundle of such states. Kant wavers between this view and the one that radically differentiates him from Hume, the admission of a synthetic or transcendental unity of apperception, a unifying ego, an I, which cannot be identified with a perception or a thought, and without which no knowledge is possible. But this ego of Kant is different from the Atman of the Vedanta, for the former is still an empirical form relating itself to empirical experience. Kant holds that his ego transcends empirical consciousness: but really it cannot do so, for it becomes in his hands an individualised will which ever presses beyond itself. But he distinguishes it from the empirical ego as the Vedanta separates the Atman from the Jiva. The notion of the self appears to Kant to be an object of the discursive reason because he deliberately makes it an object of the reason. We do not know our own existence through the reason, but we have an immediate intuitive apprehension of our being identical with an indivisible consciousness. This fact is too clear to require extra contemplation over it. Our conscious being never becomes an object; it ever persists in being the ground and presupposition of all our processes of knowledge. If the self is to become an object, where is the knowledge of this object to subsist? This knowledge would require another self on which to base itself; and this process of reasoning would end in an infinite regress. The apprehension of the self does not admit of any relations, any *process* of knowing, any kind of duality in regard to itself. The Vedanta declares

that there are certain spiritual laws which we daily experience in our own selves, though indistinctly on account of the presence of a veil of ignorance covering the self, and which exist even prior to the categories of the understanding. As Kant's *a priori* categories or principles of knowledge are universal and determine the nature of perceptions and things, so the Vedanta holds that there are principles of knowledge which are more universal and necessary than Kant's Judgments and categories and which determine even these judgments and categories. Knowledge through the understanding is by no means the only possible one. There is a spiritual realisation of the Absolute, which is not a mere probability but a certainty, a certainty greater than that offered by the fact of our experience of an empirical world of bodies.

Kant is a person who knows, and yet knows not he knows. He makes suggestive statements, comes to the very borderland of reality, but stops there. This he does because he is unable to step beyond the realm of the understanding and finds himself hemmed in from all sides by the laws of the understanding. He says that the concepts or the ideas of the pure reason, the ideas of a unified world, soul and God, are merely regulative principles which reveal the limits of possible knowledge and assert that there is a transcendental reality beyond our possible experience. Now Kant does not know that his assertion of a transcendental reality is impossible merely with the aid of his categories. He owed the possibility of this concept of things-in-themselves to a touch of the supersensuous intuition, though this intuition never came to him as a direct perception. He says that the

things-in-themselves can be thought, though not known. Now, how does thought function? It does so through the categories. Can we apply the categories in our thinking the things-in-themselves? No. Then by what means does Kant think them? He cannot say that it is the reason and not the mind that thinks them, for even the reason functions with the categories. It is obvious then that he thinks the things-in-themselves with a faculty transcending the senses and the categories. And this is nothing short of supersensuous intuition.

Kant overlooks the fact that the reason always exhibits an irresistible confidence in its powers to apprehend the things-in-themselves in empirical perception. It refuses to yield to the threats of the understanding that what it knows are mere projections of the relative categories of possible knowledge. It is impossible to disregard the superhuman urge within us which is ever anxious to recognise the supreme need for the indivisible, the infinite, the real in us and in all things. Kant also forgets that he cannot account for the correspondence of the forms of the categories of the mind within with the material of sense-perception outside, unless there is a common conscious background, a unity underlying the two. Knowledge is possible because of an existence which is common to both the subject and the object. If the categories of the understanding do not bear a consciousness-relation to the material supplied by the senses, there would be no adaptation of the former to the latter. The relation between the mind within and the objects outside is a knowledge-relation, and this knowledge or consciousness should be an underlying unity covering both

the knower and the known. In other words knowledge conceived as the presupposition and ground of all possible human knowledge in empirical experience is universal existence itself. It is this independent, omnipresent Existence-Consciousness that we term the Absolute.

If, as Kant thinks, the Ideas of reason have merely a regulative use, valid only insofar as they give a unity and order to our knowledge, and if we are to act merely *as if* their objects exist, we would be living in a world of fancies, imaginations, chimeras; nay, life would be impossible. The meaning that we instinctively discover in life detests any such propositions, and affirms a preciousness and value in existence that cannot be compared with anything we perceive in the world of sense. The Ideas of reason are not mere probabilities or future possibilities, but stand for an eternal fact that is the very basis of the entire structure of possible knowledge here. The possibility of having in our reason such Ideas arises not, as Kant thinks, on account of reason's abstracting the conditions from the conditioned, but by the very presuppositions made by the reason itself. We proceed not from the conditioned to the unconditioned, but from the unconditioned to the conditioned. We begin with a self-evident unconditioned consciousness which is in us, and without assuming which as a fact there can be no thought, no life. Even the functions of the Ideas of reason as pointers to the limits of experience imply the existence of the limitless, for a knowledge of what is beyond limits is at once included in our knowledge of limits. Descartes was confident that we cannot know ourselves as finite beings without referring this knowledge



of ours to the existence of the infinite. Further, how can the conditioned ideas which we have been given by the conceptual categories give rise to the Ideas of the infinite, the unconditioned, the immortal? How can the Idea of the Absolute arise in us if it is not buried already in our own consciousness? How can even an idea or a notion or a concept of the Absolute or the infinite become possible if our consciousness is completely locked within the finite categories? Kant misses to discover in the Ideas of reason real a priori principles which logically precede the categories of the understanding. H. J. Paton, a well-known Kantian scholar, tells us that Kant does not really seem to have argued from the existence of the given in experience to the things-in-themselves as its cause, but rather seemed to regard them as immediately present to us in all appearances. A knowledge that the world is phenomenal is based on an inner conviction, pointing not merely to a probability or a possibility but to the reality of all realities, and suggesting that an immutable being exists transcending phenomena. It is Kant's intellectual bias that prevents him from accepting these truths which shine before us as in daylight. To the senses the real, no doubt, appears as an abstract idea, for it is far removed from the reach of their knowledge. Kant shows a prejudice in favour of the sole authority of sense-knowledge when he disregards the claims of the Ideas of reason and relegates them to the limbo of probabilities. The organising capacity, the law and order and the passion for unity present in the mind prove the existence of a unitary and indivisible conscious self. Space and time, though empirically real, are

transcendentally ideal, and the necessity and universality of the truths of mathematics which is possible only in spatial extension and the time-form felt as a succession of homogeneous moments, and of physics which owes allegiance to the laws of mathematics in conformity with the categories of the understanding, emerges out of the mind as an outward phenomenal expression of the unity underlying the processes of all our knowledge. The immediate consciousness of self requires it to be recognised as unlimited, pervading all phenomena. This consciousness in its essence is the Supreme Being. It is the *Isvara* of the Vedanta when viewed in relation to the world of experience; it is Brahman in its own being. As the categories of the understanding suit the sense-material in giving us knowledge, the Ideas of reason refer to Ultimate Reality, though we require a deeper insight to appreciate this fact. And even as the categories by themselves have no significance in knowledge without their adaptation to sense-material received in empirical perception, the Ideas of reason have no significance of their own in knowledge if they do not agree with the Reality experienced in supersensuous intuition. These Ideas do not merely constitute a regulative method in life, but act as representations of the Reality existing by its own right. The systematic unity which the Idea of the Supreme Being gives to life is the shadow cast by the existence of the Supreme Being.

Kant's argument against the ontological proof for the existence of God needs correction. His illustration that the idea of my having some thalers in my pocketbook does not

prove that they exist there is not applicable to our concept of God. What Kant needs to be told is that he could not have the idea of thalers if thalers did not have existence. What is important is not whether they exist in the pocketbook or elsewhere, but that they exist; their existence or non-existence in the pocketbook is irrelevant to the question of the Idea of God, for the Idea of God is the Idea of the omnipresent, the infinite, not something which may exist somewhere localised as in the pocket-book or outside it, and so such an Idea should imply the existence of what it points to, even as the idea of thalers proves that thalers do exist. The reason why Kant finds himself obliged to deny existence to God from the Idea of God is that he entirely cuts off thought from reality, while in fact thought at one stage of its being gets identified with reality. The cosmological argument for the existence of God depends on the ontological argument, and gets explained together with it. The contingent demands a cause, the non-contingent, the non-accidental, which is necessary to give completeness and a systematic character to experience. That such a cause does not exist cannot follow from the contingent nature of phenomena; on the other hand, contingent phenomena affirm an absolute ground. We are bound to admit the existence of an Intelligent Being on which phenomena depend. In his account of the physico-theological proof for the existence of God Kant makes God an Architect of the world building upon a hampering material, but does not think that God can be shown to be the creator of the world, subjecting the world to His Will. It is a false abstraction of the Idea of God from the nature of

things that is responsible for Kant's supposition that God is an outward agency working on a given material. The Idea of God includes the ideas of omnipresence, eternity and infinity, which forbid any attempt to exclude God's presence from the world. God can have meaning only when He comprehends the world in the very existence of His consciousness, which not only takes Him beyond even creatorship but makes Him the Absolute-Existence. To the Vedanta, the Absolute is the only reality, which includes and transcends every form of experience. This Absolute is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

## **CHAPTER XII: GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH HEGEL**

Hegel takes the philosophy of Kant to its fullest implications and gives us the grandest metaphysics that ever appeared on Western soil. Reason or Spirit becomes in Hegel the be-all and end-all of philosophy. The logical categories become the framework of reality itself. The logic of the mind is the same as the metaphysics of reality. The real is the rational and the rational is the real. Mind and Nature are not two distinct realms but phases of the evolution of the Absolute which manifests itself everywhere in the universe, in matter and mind, in the individual and society, in history, science, art, religion and philosophy, all at once. The Absolute is the Reality. Its essence is Reason. The universe is conceived as a logical or rational system, a process of the workings of the Absolute Reason. The Reason is the supreme. Everything is an embodiment of Reason. There is the Reason exhibited in every action, every movement, every thought; the life of the universe becomes the more rational, the more it unfolds in itself the Absolute Reason. In Logic, Nature and Spirit can be discovered the three stages of the evolution of the Absolute towards the realisation of Self-consciousness. The Absolute Spirit is the goal or the consummation of the activity of the Reason. All the parts of the universe are organically determined by the purpose of the whole which is the Absolute and which is logically prior to all the parts. No part has meaning or reality apart from its organic relation to the whole. Hegel's system is the famous logical or absolute idealism.

Kant made a metaphysics of reality an impossibility. Hegel makes it supreme above all things. For Hegel, to know the Reason is to know Reality. The laws of Reason are the laws of Reality. Hegel's Reason is in a process of evolution. Every higher stage in this evolution includes and transcends the lower and thus becomes the purpose, intention, meaning and truth of the lower. The higher is the self-unfoldment or the self-realisation of the lower. In the higher is the real being of the lower made more explicit and conscious of its being. Every stage in this rational evolution reflects a universal situation, every stage has in it elements which speak of the past and predict the future, for the Absolute is implicit in every stage. This process of the self-development of the Reason, Hegel calls the dialectic of the Reason.

Hegel observes that everywhere there is change in the universe. Nothing persists in the same condition forever. Everything tends to and passes into something else. Every particular state is negated by factors contradicting it or rather raising it from its present being; and then there is another state in which this contradiction or negation is reconciled and made once again a consistent whole. This process of being, negation and reconciliation continues perpetually in all things in the universe, until the Absolute is realised in Self-consciousness. Hegel calls these three stages of affirmation, contradiction and fulfilment the thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The different parts of the Absolute Whole which act as the theses, antitheses and synthesis in evolution have no meaning in relation to themselves taken separately or independently. When

viewed as discrete elements they appear as mere contradictions or discrepancies, but they all have a great meaning in relation to the Whole or the Absolute in which they seek their fulfilment and being, and the dialectical process is the way in which all things proceed necessarily towards this realisation of Self in the Absolute. In every stage of this development the materiality, mechanism, inertness and rigidity of things get transcended and the entire Nature engages itself in disclosing its essential immortal being in Absolute-Consciousness. But Hegel makes a remark that the Absolute realised in the end as a result of evolution is not as such the complete whole; the Absolute, *together with* the process of evolution constitutes the complete whole. Here is a snag in his philosophy.

Hegel makes Nature or the universe necessary for the Absolute. But the tendency seen in his universe to overcome materiality and put on immortality in Self-consciousness proves that materiality is not real, that ultimately the real is consciousness, that consciousness is the only reality and that Nature which is another name for the externalised existence of material bodies is only an appearance which is gradually transcended at every stage, till at last the Absolute consciousness is realised. Thus the material universe loses its meaning in the Absolute, and so it is an indefensible position to say that the universe is necessary for the Absolute to give the latter its completeness or perfection. If by this necessity for the universe Hegel means that it is necessary for the evolutionary process, he ought to have said that it is

necessary for the purpose of relative evolution and not for the Absolute which transcends the relative.

Another error of his is to have conceived the Absolute itself as subject to evolution or change, for an Absolute that has internal or external changes would become perishable. Evolution stops at the realisation of the supreme Self-consciousness in the Absolute, for that is the final goal of all motion and action, physical or mental. It is illogical to say that the perfection of the Absolute depends even in part on the existence of the universe, for the universe loses itself in the being of consciousness the moment the Absolute is realised. If there is a universe different from the Absolute, the Absolute is contradicted and it cannot even be. If the universe is non-different from the Absolute, the question of a necessity for the universe does not arise, for then the Absolute alone is. The Absolute is not something that is realised in the future by the dialectical process; it is eternally present at every stage of the process, though it requires to be realised in Self-consciousness attainable through such a process. Hegel fears that the Absolute would be rendered an abstract nothingness if it is divested of the universe. This fear is due to his false notion of concreteness derived from the unconscious belief that substantiality and reality mean some kind of solidity or tangibility which belief is an unfortunate lingering of the irrational instinct that affirms the authenticity of the deliverances of the senses. The Absolute is the being of the universe too, and the universe would become non-existent if it is to be deprived of the reality of the Absolute. Evolution is a phenomenal process which cannot be stretched to the



constitution of reality. If the Absolute is to be the sole reality, its being should be unconditioned and should consist in non-relative, intuitive experience, which also means that it should be without any change or modification in its being, that it should not stand in need of anything from outside, should not involve internal development or evolution. It should in a way be undifferentiated, but not a bare abstraction devoid of content. All content is transformed and ennobled in the Absolute, and its existence is identical with its content. It is existence, content, consciousness, freedom, infinity, eternity, all at once and in one. Human reason cannot comprehend it, it is known in super-rational intuition or Self-realisation. The absoluteness of the Absolute implies also that its existence does not consist of plural entities or moments, that it is secondless, non-objective, through and through.

Hegel's difficulties are mostly due to his confusing the categories of the human reason with the Absolute consciousness. As we have already observed, the logic of the human reason is far from being identical with the constitution of Reality. The human reason is discursive, dividing subject and object, proceeding in a mathematical fashion, impossible without the concepts of space, time and causation. Kant was right when he said that human understanding is bound to the phenomenal categories and cannot correspond to reality as such. Hegel is right in holding that the Absolute Reason or consciousness is the essence of reality, but he is wrong in stretching the laws of human reason or intellect to the realm of reality. The logic of the ordinary human reason is not the metaphysics of

reality; metaphysics is a study of the wider universal implications of human experience. Hegel's attachment to the powers of human reason is too strong to allow him to concede any superlogical intuition. This is why he thinks that pure being is equal to nothing, that reality is a becoming or a synthesis of being and nothing, that a non-dual, undifferentiated Absolute is inconceivable, that the Absolute is dynamic change and process, in a state of flux or evolution, and that there is development in the Absolute Reason. Hegel attributes to the Absolute what he observes in Nature through his human sense and reason, and then makes a categorical declaration that a logical necessity is the same as metaphysical verity. Logic could become metaphysics if we understand by logic the laws of the deeper implications of human experience, the laws either of the governing principles of the cosmic Reason which may be said to represent the true plan of the Absolute, or of the eternal Nature of the Absolute itself. Phenomenal evolution can be attributed to the cosmic Reason, but not to the Absolute. But Hegel does not make any such reserve in his concept of evolution, and sees in Reality itself the dynamic changes of evolution, an empty abstraction when Nature is removed from experience, and causation even in the essential constitution of Reality. All these are imperfect notions of the human reason working in relation to the phenomenal Nature but not attributable to the perfection of the Absolute. Change is a symptom of want, an imperfection, which we cannot ascribe to the self-complete Absolute. Hegel's logic is the logic of the phenomenal reason, and if he is to stick to his logic in constructing

metaphysics, even supposing, as he says, that this logic is super-individual, he would only be giving us a metaphysics of the cosmic Reason, and not of the Absolute. Hegel never became conscious that there can be a Consciousness more real and unifying than the phenomenal reason, whose implications take evolution to the cosmic Reason, and boldly began to build a metaphysics with the material made available by sense-experience and the logical categories. Though his Reason is made the essence of Reality transcending sense-experience, this is done only after material is already drawn from sense and understanding. Hegel's system can become a monument of the genius to which reason can ever rise, if only his prejudice in favour of the phenomenal functions of reason is removed from his metaphysics of Reality. Yes; the real is the rational and the rational is the real, provided we, even when raising the Real above sense-experience, do not introduce the relative categories of the understanding, with its concomitant notions of duality, plurality and change, to the essence of the Real, and understand by the Reason and the Real the immutable universal Consciousness implied in all experience. Otherwise, the Real has to be limited to the cosmic Reason. The Absolute is complete even without any reference to evolution or development, for the latter is meaningful only in phenomenal perception and not in the experience of eternal completeness. If Hegel would restrict his dialectical process to the work of the cosmic Reason in the relative universe, and not take it to the Absolute itself, his system would join hands with the Vedanta.

In agreement with the Vedanta, Hegel considers the Absolute to be the truth of all things. All things have their being in the Absolute. There is only one Consciousness everywhere, the self-accomplished Absolute, which, however, when it is equated with Ultimate Reality, cannot fit in with Hegel's view that the Absolute has to undergo dialectical process in order to complete itself in the Self-consciousness of Spirit. The opinion that a reader of Hegel is likely to form in his mind is that his Absolute is not yet ready and that it has to be manufactured in the future by the evolutionary process of the dialectic of Reason. But Hegel does not permit one to form this opinion consistently, for he asserts that the Absolute is implicit in all the stages of the process and that it is the sole eternal Reality. This, again, would make one feel that his Absolute is an immutable being, not subject to change. Can we then say that the dialectical process is the passage of the relative individual reason functioning in an organic relation to the phenomenal universe towards a gradual unfoldment within itself of the transcendent Absolute which is eternally present in the deepest recesses of its consciousness? May evolution be discoverable only in the Cosmic Reason and not in its essence which is the Absolute? Then cosmic evolution would be possible and necessary, and yet it would not affect the Absolute. But Hegel does not give us the freedom to understand him in this way; he insists that Reality is a becoming, that it is a logical process of dynamic developing evolution. We thus notice two contradictory views which are held by Hegel: on one side he says that there is change and development, evolution or becoming in

the Reality. This is clearly an unwarranted transference of relative phenomena experienced by the individual reason to the trans-empirical Absolute. On the other side, he asks us not to forget that his Reason is not any individual state, not the differentiated ideas of the human being, but that it is a universal rational necessity implied in all thoughts, which is transcendental, metaphysical and which has to be realised in Self-consciousness. Here Hegel confuses between the functions of the individual reason moving in adaptation to the evolutionary phenomena of Nature and the Absolute Consciousness which is the true goal of his philosophy.

There are, however, certain features in Hegel's philosophy which are suggestive of great meaning and for which he deserves the credit that is due to a great philosopher. One of such features is his logical development of the Absolute Idea and carrying it through Nature, to consummate it in the Absolute Spirit, though he did not work out this theory perfectly. His dialectic continues till the Absolute Idea realises itself in the Absolute Spirit. It is possible for us to do proper justice to Hegel by confining his dynamic change, development or evolution to the Absolute Idea and Nature, to the universal subject and the universal object, until they reach their perfection in the Absolute Spirit, without attributing evolutionary development to this Spirit itself, provided we bring about a radical change and rectification in Hegel's notion of the Spirit. For Hegel's Absolute Spirit, though it is said to be the self-fulfilment of the Absolute Idea through Nature, is made to seek its perfect expression in art, religion and philosophy. One would have expected Hegel to take the

Idea through Nature and raise it to the Transcendent Self-consciousness in the Spirit, in the manner in which the Isvara of the Advaita is raised to the Consciousness of Brahman. But Hegel appears to bring down the Absolute to the relative realm of the individuals when he makes it realise itself in art, religion and philosophy, so that there is the dialectic even in the pure Spirit. This would obviously be a travestied completion of his great philosophy. The Absolute Idea, again, should be carefully freed from individual psychological functions or the logical categories of human thought, and made the cosmic Reason of the Isvara of the Vedanta. If we bring about this change in our concept, and forget Hegel's own description of the Absolute Spirit, and understand this Spirit in the sense of the Brahman of the Vedanta, we would be able to discover the Isvara of the Vedanta in his Absolute Idea and the body of Isvara in his Nature. The Absolute Spirit would then be Brahman. Hegel's contention that God is no God without the universe, that God cannot cease to be manifesting himself as the universe, and that he cannot be without recognising himself in the universe which is his universal object and yet non-different from him can be meaningful only when this God is understood in the sense of Isvara, who, too, is no Isvara without the universe, who cannot ever cease from appearing as the universe, and who cannot be without recognising himself in the universe which is his universal object and which is non-different from him. Change and evolution are to be seen in Isvara and in his cosmic body, which two are organically related to each other and which are the prototype of all the continuously

evolving individuals here. As the embodiment of all individuals Isvara has plurality in him, though these plural elements are inseparable parts of the organism of his body. So have change and evolution to be characteristics of Hegel's Absolute Reason as the Idea, which has Nature as its universal body, the two being organically related to each other, and which, as the embodiment of all the relative moments in the dialectical process, is constituted of a plurality of such moments, which are bound to it organically by *internal relations*. Both for Isvara and the Absolute Idea of Hegel the universal body is not outside as a material existence but is one with knowledge or Reason. All that Hegel has said in regard to the Absolute Idea would then apply to Isvara and His Nature as the body of the Idea would correspond to the *Jagat* which is the body of Isvara. Nature and history become the stages of the evolution of the Idea into Self-consciousness in the Spirit. But we have to keep the Absolute Spirit apart, unaffected by change, as we do Brahman. This, however, is only a suggestion, and it should not be forgotten that Hegel does not deal with his system in this way.

Another interesting feature in the philosophy of Hegel is his development of the theory of *internal relations*. The parts of the Absolute are all internally related to it, and this relation they bear even among themselves. God is a logical system of relations. The whole and the part are related to each other organically. A part is what it is because of its unique relation to the whole, and without this relation the part is nothing; it can have neither meaning nor being. Every part is sustained by every other part in a manner that

Whitehead is to describe in his theory of organism. Every part is dependent on every other part, and determines it. The whole always exceeds the mathematical sum of its parts; the infinite is not merely an aggregate of finites. The parts are not externally related in a way that one does not determine the other, but are internally related so that any change in any part will affect the whole. The whole ceases to be what it is now when there is modification of condition in any part. Every change is a universal change; there is no such thing as change in a particular part alone. Every situation anywhere mirrors a universal situation. The nature and purpose of the whole is the sole factor that determines what a part is at any given moment. The whole is prior to the parts and is the reality of the parts. The Absolute is such a whole and the individuals in the universe are such parts of it, bearing such relations to it. A complete knowledge of any part involves a knowledge of the whole, for the true essence of the part is in the whole. So it is impossible to have a real knowledge of anything in the universe without a knowledge of the Absolute. The theory of internal relations applies to Isvara, but not to Brahman. And Hegel ought to confine all relations to the Absolute that is conceived in relation to the phenomenal universe, and not to the Absolute as such in its pure essence. The Vedanta holds that attainment of perfect knowledge is impossible as long as one is bound to the empirical universe, and says that 'by knowing *That*, all things become known', in an instantaneous, indivisible, eternal *Now* and an infinite *Here*.



Hegel's Absolute becomes a relative conceptual process and not an immutable consciousness, because the latter is realised only in non-mediate intuition which, for Hegel, is not the genuine way of knowing. He holds that Reality cannot be known in any mystic intuition, but is known only in thought—Reason. He thinks that Reality cannot be pure being and that any attempt for such an intuition of it would not give us anything more than this abstract being. We find in philosophers like Sankara and Swami Sivananda an insistence that the findings of the intellect have to be judged by the revelations of intuition, but Hegel would have it that the claims of any intuition should be made concrete and real by logical thought. Hegel dissects experience into abstract intuition and concrete reasoning and thinks that intuition is something cut off from the rational process. The result is that he produces a system of philosophy in which Reality becomes a changing process, thus denying its own existence as Reality.

Intuition is a faculty of knowing which is not infra-intellectual but super-intellectual. It is the integral realisation of the true essence of things. The knower enters the very spirit or being of the knowable object and knows it in his own being and consciousness in an instantaneous wholeness which the intellect cannot understand. Intellect is transfigured and raised in intuition, not negated or abandoned. Hegel's extreme views on the value of rationality are due to an incapacity in him to comprehend the nature of a super-rational means of knowing. Hegel's own theory that the whole is prior to the parts and that it determines the parts gets defeated by his inductive system

of the dialectical process which constructs a general Absolute from the particular phases observed in life through the phenomenal reason. Intuition gives us the whole at once, as prior to the appearance of the particulars, while intellect, which is the tool of Hegel, splits up Reality into parts and infers the former from the latter. Induction can give us only probabilities and not self-evident truths. How, then, did Hegel become confident of the existence of a trans-empirical Absolute which is unattainable by induction and which logically precedes the various knowable particulars in the world? It is impossible to get an Idea of the Absolute by dovetailing particulars through conceptual reasoning. The fact is that Hegel has already in his mind an Idea of the Absolute even prior to his commencing the exposition of the dialectical process which is only a later instrument employed to justify the Idea which was in him intuitively. Nothing but a mystical moment experienced could have been responsible for the rise of an Idea of the Absolute in Hegel's mind. But this Idea was afterwards clouded by an exaggerated importance given to conceptual thought, and so what Hegel discovered is not the eternal Reality of intuition but a phenomenal appearance of it which makes it inseparable from what we observe in Nature through our imperfect means of the conceptual categories. True philosophy is a rational declaration of intuitional experience, and not a conceptual grouping of externally observed phenomena. Intuition is the immediate knowing by the total being of the Self, while intellect is only an understanding of a few empirical parts. Hegel would have become one of the greatest expounders

of the Vedanta, if only he could recognise the significance of intuition, whereby we know the Absolute as it is, and not as it merely appears to us.

### CHAPTER XIII: ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

If Hegel is the philosopher of the Intellect, Schopenhauer is the philosopher of the Will. He takes his start from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and holds that the thing-in-itself which for Kant was an unknowable noumenon is knowable directly in one's own self as volitional activity. The Will is the thing-in-itself. Schopenhauer's Will is not the individual psychological will, but a universal metaphysical principle, spaceless and timeless and uncaused, even as Hegel's Reason, as he held, is not merely an individual function. The Will, says Schopenhauer, manifests itself in the individual as impulse, instinct and craving. The Will, again, it is that appears as consciousness and body. Thus the true self of man is identified with the Will.

Everything in the world, too, becomes an expression of the Will. The world is Will and Idea and has no independent material existence. The Will is above the Idea and is the only reality. The Will is blind, unconscious, and the Idea which is conscious is only its appearance in the intellect. We see nothing anywhere except the Will and the body which is the expression of the Will. Right from unconscious matter up to the self-conscious man the Will alone reigns supreme. It appears unconscious in something and conscious in another. It is all strife, activity, yearning that we observe everywhere. Desire is the cause of all things. With the Yogavasishta, Schopenhauer would say that there is the eye because there is desire to see, there is the ear because there is desire to hear. The body and bodily functions are the expression of the Will. The digestive

organs are the objectifications of hunger, the feet of the desire for movement, the brain of the desire for knowledge. There can be no body, and no world, without the Will. Longing, craving, or function, determines the nature of being, of the kind of organisation which becomes the body of the Will. The Will-to-live is the root of all things. It is the cause of struggle, suffering, pain. The Will is the great evil that accounts for the misery of all beings.

Schopenhauer's concept of the Will is fascinating. The Will is the Reality and it is blind urge. Consciousness or intelligence is its phenomenal effect made manifest in higher organisms in order to pave the way for the work of the Will in the world. For Schopenhauer intelligence is not the essential nature of the self. It is only a production of the brain created by the Will for its own purposes. Consciousness is an appearance, Will the Reality which is the immortal force that never dies with the death of individuals, never perishes through change. It may manifest itself in a mortal shape as individuals, but it cannot itself cease to be. The Will is imperishable being.

Schopenhauer's Will is more like the Mula-Prakriti of the Vedanta, which is essentially unconscious activity, rather than Reality whose essential nature is consciousness. Individual consciousness which expresses itself in the intellect is defined by the constitution of Prakriti whose representation is the intellect. Intellect is the medium through which intelligence becomes manifest. But, in the Vedanta, Prakriti is not Reality, and consciousness is not the expression of Prakriti. Consciousness is the essence of Reality which is beyond Prakriti. But it is true that the

intellectual intelligence in man is controlled by its unconscious Master, the Prakriti with its primary modes of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Perhaps the Freudian psychoanalysts would be friendly with Schopenhauer as he would be an aid in demonstrating their theory of psychological determinism, that the conscious is always determined by the nature of the unconscious, and that free will is an illusion produced by the false notion that the conscious is independent of the unconscious. Instinct, craving, urge, is at the root of even the operation of reason. We are here reminded of Bradley's saying that metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, and that to find these reasons, again, is no less an instinct. But the urge for knowledge is not an irrational blind force. The instinct that makes it impossible for us to desist from the noble enterprise of metaphysics is a super-rational aspiration which voices forth the longings of the infinite in us. Schopenhauer's blind Will cannot answer to this deepest truth in us, nor can the unconscious of Freud go beyond a mere sum of the unmanifested creative impressions and impulses left by our past conscious acts, since ages. Consciousness is not a by-product of the unconscious Will, any more than it is a secretion of the material brain.

Schopenhauer's theory that consciousness is only a mirror of the unconscious Will is, as it can be very easily shown, an untenable assumption. The arguments against materialism naturally level themselves against this view of Schopenhauer. How can consciousness be manifested by an unconscious principle unless it is hidden in the

unconscious itself? If consciousness is latent in the unconscious, then the unconscious itself must be endowed with consciousness, though we may accept that this consciousness remains unmanifested in it. If consciousness is different from the unconscious, it is not even a manifestation of the unconscious, and in this position even the existence of the unconscious cannot be known for want of any relation between consciousness and the unconscious. We can as well say that the unconscious does not exist at all. If, on the other hand, consciousness and the unconscious are one in essence, the unconscious gets illuminated by consciousness and its essence becomes consciousness. Even on this supposition the unconscious ceases to be. If it is said that the unconscious alone is, and there is no such thing as consciousness, we say that, as in that case no one would know that there is the unconscious there is no warrant for the supposition that the unconscious exists. Schopenhauer can convey to us no meaning by asking us to run away from Reality or to overcome Reality. Reality cannot be abandoned or destroyed or overcome; it is the Supreme Being which every one has to realise in one's own self. How can such a Reality be a blind Will, a body of craving that brings misery? Instead of asking us to rise from phenomena to Reality, he wants us to be rid of Reality. Moreover, the Real should necessarily be the good. It requires no argument to prove this, for the Real is naturally not different from one's own self. Have we to flee from our own selves? Has this teaching any sense?

Schopenhauer's Will, the evil principle, has to be considered a cosmic *conception* of the individual will which

is characterised by the evil of craving. A cosmic being, by itself, cannot be evil, for no ethical or moral value, desire, pleasure or pain can be attributed to what is super-individual. Evil is meaningful only in the individual, not in Reality. We can accept the theory of a primordial unconscious cosmic existence, as the Prakriti of the Vedanta, and a conscious Idea appearing in it, as Isvara or Hiranyagarbha. But we cannot make even this conscious Idea an appearance of the unconscious, for consciousness cannot proceed from unconsciousness. We have to posit a Reality whose essential nature is consciousness and which manifests itself in the cosmic unconscious as the conscious Idea. Further, the evil has to be confined to the individual psychological will which is a spoilt child of the cosmic Will, and should not be taken to the cosmic Will itself which is a metaphysical principle transcending good and evil. Schopenhauer's advice that one should free oneself from the evil will amounts to nothing more than that one should transcend individual existence, and cannot mean that one should avoid Reality itself, which is an impossibility. He has made the mistake of objectifying the individual will in the cosmos and calling it a metaphysical Reality. Even if everyone's will is to be evil, it does not mean that the cosmic Will is evil, for even all individual wills put together cannot make the cosmic Will. The argument against Kant's supposition that the categories of the understanding, objectively present in the sense that they are in all men, determine the nature of perceived objects, applies also to Schopenhauer's belief that the evil will has a metaphysical existence. Will is not Reality; it is the dynamic executive



power of consciousness, cosmically as well as individually. In the cosmos it is free; in the individual it is bound and determined.

Schopenhauer's philosophy has, however, great value if only we would take it in its application to psychology, and not as a fully convincing system of metaphysics, not forgetting at the same time that while psychology is concerned with the behaviour and the functions of the individual mind, it is totally ignorant of the transcendental aspirations and the sublime conscious endeavours of the higher spiritual reason in man. Our want, says Schopenhauer, determines and is at the bottom of our reasonings. It is not because we reason that we want; reason is the servant of want. Want is considered to be the master of even the reason. We cannot influence people by appealing always to their understanding; understanding is dominated by volitional cravings. We have to appeal to the Will which is the seat of desire. Schopenhauer thinks that there is no use of reasoning and argumentation with people—they can never be persuaded or convinced by appeal to reason—they yield when the activities of their Will, their private cravings, their urges, their interests are appealed to. We forget what we merely understand; we remember what we desire. Reason or understanding is a mere tool in the hands of the cravings and fears of the Will. The Will-to-live, not the understanding, is the mainspring of all action. Schopenhauer would agree with us if we say that all life is a struggle for food, clothing, shelter, sex and protection from outside attack. Only we have to add, though Schopenhauer never seems to have had the patience

to reflect over it, that there is another higher instinct, a secret aspiration in man which supersedes all the lower instincts, the aspiration for the wisdom of Truth, notwithstanding that this is rarely seen in most human beings.

Organic attraction and mechanical pull are both to Schopenhauer expressions of the Will-to-live. This Will tries falsely to overcome death by self-reproduction. This is why, says Schopenhauer, the sexual urge is so strong in all beings. It is just another phase of the Will-to-live, the assertion of its immortality, its attempt to live eternally as an individual of the species. The instincts for self-preservation and self-reproduction are not different from each other. The latter is only the process of ensuring the existence of the former in the future, too. Hence there is only one instinct, the turbulent, unquenchable Will-to-live. The intellect has no power over this instinct. Schopenhauer makes the romances of love merely the subtle contrivances of the Will-to-live, the instruments used by it in its dark and wild operations to preserve itself. He concludes that sexual love brings misery to the individual because its aim is not the pleasure or the good of the individual but the continuation of the species, for which Nature shrewdly covers the reason of the individual and induces it to lay faith in the illusion that this is for its own pleasure and good. Thus the attempt of the Will to immortalise itself ends in its defeat, for what is here immortalised is not the individual but the species. The individual has been cleverly deceived! Pleasure has no place in the process of the preservation of the species.

Here Schopenhauer gives merely a psychological interpretation of the Will-to-live asserting itself as the Will-to-reproduce. Its metaphysical implications are to be discovered in the dialectical process of Hegel and the 'satisfaction' of 'actual entities' in the philosophy of Whitehead. The neutralisation of the thesis and the antithesis in the synthesis, which is the way in which all things create and recreate themselves and which Hegel employed to describe the integrating process of the higher evolution of the individuals towards the realisation of Self-consciousness in the Absolute applies distortedly in relative individuals, ignorant of any such higher purpose, to the reproduction of individualities. In Whitehead the Hegelian dialectic continues in an elaborate manner. The actual entities of Whitehead supply the data which are sought to be unified into the 'satisfaction' of the innate urge to create. An 'actual entity' is said to enjoy the process of creating itself out of its data, feel a 'satisfaction' in its self-emergence. An 'actual entity' becomes a 'subject' when it emerges out of the pre-existing world of actual entities. The implied meaning of all this is that a creative urge is immanent in all things, which in its higher liberating archetypal existence becomes an integrating conscious march to the realisation of the Absolute, and in its lower binding reflected aspect in mortal individuals assumes the form of a blind seeking to perpetuate the species. Here the lower becomes a travesty of the higher. The Greek philosophers had evidently this in their minds when they held the extraordinary view that sexual love represents in the world of sense a shadow of Divine love. The Hindu

ethics, too, regards marriage not as a contract of love, but as a sacrament, a devout union of souls for the fulfilment of a purpose higher than the mundane. It was not any element of passion but a dutiful surrender to law that determined the meaning of marriage in ancient Hindu society. It was a spiritual aim that directed the union of the sexes.

A note, however, has to be added that all this is true metaphysically and in highly advanced societies, but the ordinary individual in the world of sense gets perpetually blindfolded and stupidly forgetting all spirituality in the nature of things, does not only fail to benefit by these higher implications, but heads towards a fall into the mire of bondage and grief due to its cravings. As a rule it has to be held that there is no possibility of discovering the spiritual in external objects as long as one is locked within the prison-house of a world of ignorance, desire and attachment. Schopenhauer gives the lower empirical side of the picture, and does not rise to these heights which we know the man of today is not endowed with the ability to understand. For Schopenhauer marriage is the disillusionment of love, a trick by which every one is made to fall a victim to the blind Will. The Will can be conquered, says Schopenhauer, by overcoming the Will-to-reproduce. The Will-to-reproduce is considered the greatest evil, for it seeks to perpetuate the misery of individual existence.

Schopenhauer says that passions can be subdued by the domination of knowledge over the Will. Most of our troubles would cease to be troubles if only they could be properly understood in relation to their causes. Self-control

provides to man the greatest protection against all external compulsion and attack. True greatness is in self-mastery, not in victory over the worlds. The joy of the within is greater than the pleasure of the outside. To live in the self is to live in peace. The evil Will can be overcome by conscious contemplation on the truth of things. Schopenhauer even recommends the company of the wise and intimate relations with them as aids in this contemplation. Knowledge is the great purifier of the self of man. When the world is viewed not by sense but by knowledge, man is liberated from the evil and bondage of the Will. Knowledge takes us to the universal essence.

How can this profound insight be consistent with the notion that consciousness, intelligence or knowledge is only a phenomenon, an appearance of the Will? How can knowledge give man freedom from the Will if it is only a creature projected by the Will? Further, when the Will is Reality and also blind and evil, there can be no such thing as freedom, for the ultimate aim of existence is to return to Reality, and so the eternal experience that we have to aspire for ought to be one of unconsciousness, evil. How can Nirvana from the Will or the attainment of happiness and peace be possible, which Schopenhauer so forcibly pleads for, if the Will is Reality and consciousness its effect? How could Schopenhauer give us a chaste philosophy through his intellect if the intellect is an appearance of the evil Will? Will not then his philosophy itself become a product of blind craving and evil? Schopenhauer gives evidence to a confused mind which longs for universal and eternal freedom in perfect knowledge, but which at the same time

condemns this longing by denouncing Reality as a blind and evil Will. His resignation to asceticism which, he says, can destroy the Will and enable one to attain freedom shows that the Will is not Reality but a clinging to individual existence, and that Reality is freedom, happiness and peace.

A recognition of the limitations and sufferings, cravings and evils in the relative world ought to be no doubt the beginning of any true philosophy. But Schopenhauer commits himself many times to extreme statements which a sober mind will find difficult to appreciate fully. The limit is reached when Reality itself is jibed as evil. Such a theory is the result of an imperfect and one-sided view of life, though at times, side by side with an expression of prejudice and personal sentiment, he gives intimations of profound knowledge and a wisdom that cannot but win the admiration of the thinking world. Schopenhauer is no less a genius than either Kant or Hegel, but his genius often gets marred by certain immature conclusions, a defective metaphysics and an attempt to give the touch of wholeness to what is only one side of the nature of things. There is evil when craving rules our realm, but beyond all this is a goal which is unsurpassable splendour and bliss eternal and which we are bound to achieve. However, it has to be admitted, in the end, that Schopenhauer has done a great service to mankind by drawing its attention to the fact that life is not all roses, that there is a dark and bitter side of existence here, that there is ignorance, deception, suffering and pain, and that no philosophy which ignores this truism can ever hope to be complete.

## CHAPTER XIV: FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

For Schopenhauer the Will-to-live is the all. But Nietzsche conceives the Will-to-power as the supreme. Both are philosophers of the Will; the former teaches a voluntaristic idealism, the latter a voluntaristic individualism. Nietzsche propounds the theory which holds that the instinct for the acquisition of power is the prime factor that motivates all the activities of life. The Will as the desire for power is the principle of Reality. Intellect, reason, knowledge are all instruments of this Will. Knowledge is a means to acquire power. We observe that everything in this world has a tendency to try to overcome others, to gain superiority over everyone else, to vanquish or rule the whole world of beings. The law that directs all activities in life is the law of power, the urge to excel all others in strength. This urge is universally present and its aim is the production of the superman, the master of all beings, who is above all others in power. This Will-to-power can achieve its purpose only by striving and suffering and an inevitable loss on the part of the weak. Life is meaningful only on account of struggle. War is good; peace is a stagnation which is not worth desiring. War strengthens the race, peace weakens them. There is no universal truth, no unity, no oneness. All is difference, inequality, strife. Courage and strength are the greatest virtues; pity and compassion are bad, for they contradict the Will-to-power. Self-denial and asceticism, peace and happiness, non-resistance and equality are all oppositions to the primary instinct in life, the Will-to-power. Life is struggle for existence at its

highest. The test of a man is energy and ability. The desire of the superman is to face danger, to encounter strife in order to be supreme himself.

Nietzsche's philosophy is that of human egoism, of the assertion of individuality which all great philosophers have advised us to overcome in order that we may become really great and blessed. Nietzsche's superman cannot acquire universal power unless he realises his universal existence. How can omnipotence and individual existence be compatible with each other? Supreme power can only be in the infinite. Where, then, comes this boasted power? There is no true power when one is bound to temporal individuality. And when universal power is attained, there is a transcendence of individual existence, for then it gets identified with Reality which is infinite. Nietzsche's doctrine is obviously a proud affirmation of the principle of the 'struggle for existence' and 'survival of the fittest'. Well; courage is good, bravery is laudable. But this should be an inner toughness born of the realisation of a superhuman ideal of divinity, or at least of a sincere aspiration for this realisation. Nietzsche's superman has nothing of the divine in him; he is a proud individual. Power without knowledge is a harmful weapon, and he who wields it shall be vanquished in the course of time. The humility of the saint is not a confession of weakness but an announcement of universal Self-experience. Brutality or boorishness cannot be called a virtue. That the weak may be subjugated by force is no teaching of wisdom. And after all, who can be contented to be weak, if everyone becomes a candidate for lordship with the power of the superman? Any



transvaluation of values has to be in conformity with the deepest implications of the spiritual consciousness in man, and these implications stretch towards a oneness which is beyond individualism. Nietzsche would appear to be a protagonist in the drama of evil and vice if his craving for power is not submerged in the aspiration for higher spiritual knowledge and experience where power reaches its culmination. Knowledge is power. Power in conscious beings has to be defined as the force generated by inner illumination, by the direction of consciousness to Reality. Our power becomes great in proportion to our nearness to the Absolute.

Morality is not a weapon of the weak, as Nietzsche thinks. It is the precondition to self-control which paves the way for the knowledge that brings genuine power. That happiness is bad and peace undesirable, that war is preferable and strife indispensable is not the voice of a healthy mind. Nietzsche has not in him the insight of a Hegel to discover the good, the reality and the power of the individual in wider fields of experience where all these get transmuted in self-transcendence; not even the honesty of a Schopenhauer to detect the evils of individual existence. The greatest men of all ages were not balloons swelling with the pride of strength, but tranquil contemplatives on the light that shines beyond the realm of struggle and pain. Worldly knowledge may be a tool for exercising power over others; but knowledge as such, the wisdom of the Truth behind which dance the marionettes of all things, is not confined to any single individual; it hails supreme as the heart and soul of the entire power of the universe. Here

knowledge and power are one, and the exercise of power is the exercise of knowledge, not on anyone else, for there is no other to such knowledge. Even in the relative plane where power can be exercised over others, it is knowledge that determines the intensity and extent of power. One cannot have power without knowledge with good as its result. The good is the true which is also wisdom and power.

The struggle for existence seen in individuals is no proof of the supremacy of the Will-to-power in them. Struggle for existence is first the expression of the Will-to-live, and includes, as Schopenhauer points out, the Will-to-reproduce. The struggle to live at one's highest, again, is not a craving for power, but an attempt at the acquisition of the greatest happiness possible. No one strives for power as an end in itself, and those who think they do are obviously working under the influence of a delusion. The aim that directs the longing for unlimited power is the acquisition of unlimited happiness; and happiness is identical with freedom. Freedom at its highest is not to be had in any state of individual existence. Individuality acts as a shackle that restricts the manifestation of the infinite power potential in man, and this infinite is the Absolute. Thus, all struggle for existence is ultimately a sign of the longing for the bliss of the Absolute, which, incidentally, is unsurpassed power, also. The survival of the fittest is the success of those individuals in their environments, who approximate the more to the consciousness of the Absolute. The supreme value of life is in the realisation of this highest consciousness. Exploitation in itself is not the meaning of

the struggle for existence. Hegel's dialectical process and Whitehead's ingressive evolution better explain the significance of what appears to us as struggle for existence and exploitation of others. All beings discover their meaning in realms of consciousness which gradually transcend individuality and point to the existence of the Absolute.

## CHAPTER XV: WILLIAM JAMES

William James, the great teacher of pragmatism in America, repudiates the claims of the logical reason in constructing systems of absolute monism, which, according to him, give us an unmanageable 'block-universe' and set at naught moral responsibility, free will, effort and aspiration, indeterminacy, want and struggle which are the main characteristics and daily occurrences of life. The pragmatism of William James is a theory of the will which looks with disfavour on the intellectual philosophies which make a self-complete Absolute the entire reality. James complains that such rigoristic systems become deterministic in their nature and give no room for variety, novelty and personal effort. They contradict the practical realities of life, thus losing touch with experience and glorying in an airy abstraction. The test of truth, for James, is its practical consequences, the actual bearing it has on life. Nothing, according to James, can be accepted as true which does not stand this pragmatic test. Here the judge is not the reason but the will-to-believe which dominates all activity and experience. We cannot make truth an absolute principle or an end in itself, for such a rigid truth is nowhere seen to exist. Truth is a means to an end, an instrument for the fulfilment and satisfaction of the demands of the will-to-believe. There cannot be a universal truth, unchanging and eternal, beyond experience. What is true is what is believed to be true by men's temperaments and aptitudes. There is no objective truth independent of these individual considerations. People accept a theory not because of its logical soundness but its appeal to practical

needs. Nothing is true that is not admitted by life. The meaning of life is its practical workability, and its aim is a consistency in what it believes, understands and does. Even knowledge cannot be an end in itself, for its value is dependent on its utility in the satisfaction of practical needs. Knowledge, then, is a means to an end. James goes counter to all monistic systems of idealism, holding that truth is the same as utility in empirical experience, and that the useful is the true. What we believe irresistibly is to be regarded as truth. Even God has to satisfy the pragmatic test in order to be. Reality is not beyond phenomena or appearance; it is ever being created by our efforts.

James identifies the real with the experienced. But this experience is always pluralistic, empirical, and not monistic or absolutistic. He favours theism rather than absolutism, for theism can permit the existence of a plurality of beings together with a God whom they may worship objectively. James is an empiricist in that his will-to-believe is based on sense-perception and the experience of the multifarious world of disconnected individuals. His restricting himself to phenomenal experience makes him conceive of consciousness as a stream or a flux of states, which is not *being* but *change*. Consciousness is not a static existence but a system of relations, not independent of its contents. Even the soul is a totality of thought-relations, a process, not being. James is a thorough-going adherent to the belief in observed phenomena, who reminds us of Locke and Hume once again in a new setting.

James thinks that if we believe in an omniscient and omnipotent Absolute we will become mere puppets in the

hands of an eternally determined Divine will and cannot do anything ourselves for our progress in the future. A deterministic system of absolutism leads us to fatalism, despair and surrender. All hope is abolished from our life. Absolutism defeats our aspirations, desires and longings, and disappoints us at every step by making us play-toys in the hands of the Absolute. Not only this; absolutism mocks at our practical experiences and posits facts which have no relation to life. We are asked to believe what we neither understand nor experience. Absolutistic metaphysics does not provide an object for our immediate faith and belief. James thinks that a philosophy that undermines the validity of our personal experiences cannot stand. So he offers a God of empirical belief, a finite God, not omniscient, not omnipotent, who exists in the midst of many individuals in a universe of real disharmony and diversity. God is only a companion of man, not his eternal self. The existence of God is not organically related to the universe of experience, for the latter is a scene of opposition and struggle, while the former is a superior individual inhabiting perhaps transparent realms. There is no absolute like that of Hegel, no system or consistency of the type required by a universe directed by a self-existent primal will. Truth is not unity but diversity, though sometimes James makes indistinct statements regarding the possibility of some unity which is higher than human experience. It is all freedom of action and not any determined necessity that shapes the destiny of mankind. God does not direct our actions, but we recognise in him an object for our undeniable beliefs and irrefutable experiences. To put James' position concisely, God exists

because we need him to justify our experiences. What is real is faith and individual experience, and everything else is an accessory to it. In thinking that the universe is a field of adventure and unforeseen novelty and not a finished system of eternal completeness, James and Bergson are one.

James' complaint that absolutism gives no scope for freedom of will is not true. It allows freedom of action on the part of the individual as long as its consciousness functions in relation to a personal ego. But it disillusioned man by pointing out that this individual free will is only an empirical expression of the eternal law of the Absolute, and nothing truly independent. Man's free will is a fact of experience, but it is not ultimately real except when it is consciously identified with the workings of the Absolute in the universe. Our efforts constitute the exercise of this freewill. There is moral responsibility as long as we are confined to individual consciousness and work with free will. But we transcend all relative values in Self-realisation. What we call novelty as presented to our mind and the senses is an eternally existing fact in itself, which previously remained outside our experience but which has now become its content, not because we have created it at present while it did not exist before, but because we are now in a newer stage of evolution which presents to us a different vista of reality and a different angle of vision from which we view reality. Our aspirations are the gradual reaches of our minds towards what is beyond individuality and they have a reality and a value as long as our individualities are realities to us. Every state of consciousness in which we happen to be at any given time

appears to be real to us, though no state remains uncontradicted in a higher degree of reality. Indeterminacy is the result of limited observation; a deeper intuition into Reality reveals the eternal unity and harmony of the universe governed by an unchangeable law. But all things are undetermined to the senses, our untrustworthy servants. Our desires and wants do not disprove the existence of the Absolute or posit a real diversity, but only indicate that we have a longing to unite ourselves with it, this longing taking shape as an unwise search for happiness in sense-objects on account of a confused transference of values. Want is a sign of imperfection and of a need to reach perfection. Our struggles in life are the blind movements of this want in a wrong direction. It gets consciously directed to its real goal in sincerely aspiring souls endowed with correct discrimination, and in wise philosophers and saints.

The practical reality to which James is so much addicted is not reality in itself but merely a network of the evidences of the senses. It is hard to understand why one should lay so much emphasis on the validity of sense-experience and deny the significance of the deliverances of the higher means of knowledge. The world of sense is constantly changing, and a changeful phenomenon cannot be equated with reality. There cannot even be the changing phenomena without some unchanging support for their appearance. To say that there is no reality beyond phenomena is as meaningless as to say that there can be locomotion without space or walking without a ground. That the world is a practical reality or Vyavaharika-satta is



accepted by the Vedanta, too. But this reality is an appearance of a higher order of unity which is Paramarthika-satta. The highest reality is Brahman, the Absolute Self, which is at once being and consciousness. This consciousness, again, is not a changing flux or a stream of relations. James is more a psychologist than a philosopher and so he is made to put his trust in the psychological functions and identify them with the deepest consciousness in us. The mental consciousness is no doubt a stream, a flow, a becoming; there is nothing of being in it. But we do not flow or move with our mental states or relations; we *know* that there are states and relations, changes and becomings. Knowledge of a stream cannot itself be a stream. That we observe the states of the relations and ideas of the mind shows that we exist as witnesses independent of these changes of the mind. The true self does not move; for, if it moves, there should be another to know its movement, a third self to know this second self, and thus *ad infinitum*, so that knowledge of movement would become impossible.

Utility cannot become the test of truth. The ways of the individual are capricious, and do not by themselves set forth any definite standard of judgment. What is constantly in a state of change cannot be an ultimate truth, for all change points to something towards which it moves. If truth is based on mere belief or even on a *pragmatic consideration*, it will contradict itself every time our beliefs get disillusioned. Such a truth has no doubt a pragmatic value in the sense that even hallucinations have a value at the time of their being experienced. Even our dreams are

real and satisfy the pragmatic test in their own realm. But in the end such truths get contradicted in a greater reality than themselves. If pragmatism holds that there is no such thing as error at all, and that every experience is real within its own field, we have to add that these experiences cannot be ultimately real, for the test of reality is non-contradiction. When we apply this test we find that the plurality of individuals, the finitude of God, and the ultimate validity of observed facts in empirical life vanish in an experience which transcends relative categories. If we are to confine ourselves every time to the immediate presentations in sense-perception and mental operations, irrespective of their being dreams, errors of thought or defective revelations through the senses, we have to be forever sceptics in regard to the nature of truth. That such a sceptic attitude is impossible on the very face of it is easy to understand. Ultimate truth is not a means to an end, but an end in itself, for we have no other desire than to be in possession of truth, and as truth, in the end, should be universal, an experience of it would be the same as being in communion with it. Knowledge is the essence of truth, and what applies to truth applies also to knowledge. We cannot create truth; we only get a gradual revelation of it in the different stages of the unfoldment of our consciousness. What is created is perishable and is not truth. Else, we could call every whim, fancy and illusion a truth. Truth has a self-certainty and finality which none of the human experiences in the sense-world can afford to possess. Belief is not truth, for our beliefs often deceive us. Only a higher faith rooted in an illumined conviction can correspond to

truth. The truths of sensations as well as those of mathematics and logic—the two aspects of truth for the pragmatist—are comprehended in a higher and more inclusive experience which we term the Absolute.

The philosophy of the Absolute is not fatalistic. It gives the greatest hope and courage to man by asserting that his essence is an immortal omnipresent existence which is wisdom and truth, freedom and bliss. It does not deny free will or effort as a practical means to this glorious experience. The highest effort consists in meditation on the Absolute. Effort, however, rises beyond itself when the goal is reached. Finitude, evil, duality, plurality, change, evolution are all true and have a meaning in the level of individual experience. But they are all sublimated and absorbed in the Universal Self. There are three degrees of reality, all to be accepted as valid while they are experienced—the apparent, the practical and the absolute—revealed respectively in hallucination, in waking life, and in the supersensuous realisation of Eternal Being.

James, sometimes, seems to believe in a reality which is independent of human thinking, and like the absolute idealists makes its being consist in pure experience. Contrary to his fundamental view he speaks as though truth is discovered rather than created in the adventures of life's processes, and makes out that it is a unity as real as diversity and that experience is not confined to the diverse perceptions of the senses. These developments are definitely foreign to the main current of his thought which suggests that the conscious self is only a flow of ideas appearing successively and that an indivisible

consciousness is never experience. The idea of a real unity behind a real diversity can make no sense, for we are confronted with two realities each contending to be as universal as the other. Is James occasionally being dogged by a faint persistence of the insurmountable feeling that there ought to be, after all, a ground for all phenomena, which is immediately battled with by his usual belief that plurality cannot be denied on account of its being the object of the empirical will-to-believe? Perhaps, yes. He admits an aboriginal stuff of experience which enters experience and has not yet become properly a part of conscious life, a subject without a disjoined predicate, a neutral limit of our mental functions. But, no. What we call a universe is for him a multi-verse, and his universe is only a *universe of discourse*. The real objective field of experience is pluralistic. The oneness that he is talking about is a collection of particulars, the concatenation of things in space and time, and the continuity in the operation of the laws of physics, like gravitation, light, heat, sound, magnetism and electricity, and the influence of one man on another, etc. James thinks that even this continuity is not really continuous; it is broken up into divided parts by the existence of opaque material bodies. James overlooks the fact that even the physical universe is a perfectly continuous field of force or energy and that even opaque bodies which, according to him, create plurality in the supposed continuum are, as corroborated by the discoveries of modern physics, reducible to this common universal force or energy, and matter loses its matterness or its character of being an embodied substance when subjected to careful

observation. We know how Whitehead surmounts all plurality and division, in his illuminating philosophy of organism. Even lines of physical influence cannot be explained without a basic unity which is coextensive with our own conscious indivisible Self. James tells us that truth is neither a presentation of reality nor a correspondence with it; it is a relation between our ideas and experiences, effected, changed and created by us. That relations between things are themselves matters of experience takes us forcibly to its deeper implication that there is a unity linking all things together and that experience ought to be an undivided whole of consciousness. There cannot be consciousness of the relations of things without a universal consciousness that holds them together and makes them intelligible. James thinks that truth is a normal functioning and a harmonious relation of ideas, even as health is a normal functioning and a balanced relation of the parts of the body. He forgets that health is the indication of the expression of a wholeness that we experience when the harmonious relations of the parts of the body reflect the indivisibility of the Self. James manages to maintain, however, that reality is a stream of perceptions and ideas together with the relations that obtain between these perceptions and ideas as connecting links, and that reality is created by us every moment. He does not stop to think that no relation of ideas within is possible without an indivisible Self, and that there can be no perceptions outside without an Absolute underlying all things related in knowledge.

## CHAPTER XVI: HENRI BERGSON

Bergson, the philosopher of intuitionism and of creative evolution, conceives Reality as a vital impetus, an *élan vital*, whose essence is evolution and development. The *élan vital* is a growing and flowing process, not a static existence which admits of no change whatsoever. Logic and science, intellect and mechanism cannot fathom the depths of the vital impetus which is the basis of all life. There is change and evolution everywhere, nothing merely is. All existence is a flux of becoming, moving and growing, a succession of states which never rest where they are. The intellect works mechanistically and constructs rigid rules and systems which cannot accommodate the rolling evolution of Reality. There can be no enduring substance in the river of life. Everything is changing, goes beyond itself. We can never get immutable things anywhere in the universe. Even consciousness is not unchangeable. It is a living, moving, growing and evolving process. Consciousness is the essence of the *élan vital* which is the great Reality. It is impossible to know Reality through logic and science. It is known only in intuition which is a direct vision and experience transcending intellectual processes and scientific observations and reasonings. The *élan vital* is a creative spirit which defies the attempts of the mathematical manner of approaches to it, and demands a deeper sympathy and feeling which will enter into its very essence. In intuition we comprehend the truth of things as a whole, as a complete process of the dynamic life of the spiritual consciousness. Instinct is nearer to intuition than is intellect. Intuition is instinct evolved, ennobled and become

disinterested and self-conscious. Instinct, when not directed to action, but centred in knowledge, becomes intuition. Intuition has nothing of the mechanistic and static operations of the logical and the scientific intellect. Intellect is the action of consciousness on dead matter, and so it cannot enter the spirit of life. Any true philosophy should, therefore, energise and transform the conclusion of the intellect with the immediate apprehensions of intuition. Reality has to be lived, not merely understood.

Bergson distinguishes between matter and consciousness. While matter is mechanical, consciousness is creative, organising newer and newer situations in the onward march of evolution which constructs wider fields of consciousness from the situations of the past. The creative consciousness is at every moment in a newer condition, and does not repeat its experiences unless, of course, there is a regression. Though it evolves thus, it does not consist of differentiated parts; it always retains its indivisible character. Consciousness is free and is not determined by any necessity, either of mechanism or of finalism. It is unrestricted in its evolutionary march. We see in Bergson a touch of the Sankhya when he makes matter an instrument for the evolutionary activities of consciousness, though consciousness in the Sankhya never changes or evolves *in itself*. Bergson's consciousness and matter ought really to be conceived as expressions of a deeper impulse in which both have their common ground. But he generally maintains a dualism of matter and consciousness, though very rarely he gives a hint to this monism. Consciousness, he says, grows by drawing material from within itself and not from

outside. Matter acts as a resisting force as well as an instrument in rousing the activities of the evolving consciousness. Matter thus provides an opportunity to put to proof the force of consciousness and stimulate its efforts towards further enrichment of itself in self-evolution. Every succeeding stage in evolution is a transcendence of the past, and not a loss of it. Consciousness remains undivided in spite of its change and growth. Bergson conceives Reality as consciousness which is endless duration, time, becoming and change. God and life are one.

The God of Bergson is a finite, limited movement, ignorant of its future, not omniscient, not omnipotent, always hampered by the presence of matter, struggling against odds, finding with difficulty its next step in the darkness of what is yet to come to it as experience. Bergson's God is not yet born; he is trying to create himself. Who created his future fields of experience, who gives him the impetus to move forward, and from where does he acquire knowledge and consciousness in the future? Where is freedom for consciousness if it is its necessary impulse to act, incapable of check, and dragging everything forward by its impetuous pull? Is not consciousness, then, the tool of an irresistible urge? What is this pull, this urge? Why should it be there at all? How can we say that Bergson is wiser than the great Spinoza who said that even a piece of stone, if it were endowed with a mind, would think that it is freely moving upward when it is really thrown by us into space? What does freedom mean if it is the nature of evolution not to cease and to struggle and again struggle, knowing not where to move? Freedom is always directed by



a conscious desirable end, and when such an end is absent, freedom becomes a myth; there remains merely a groping of the impulse to urge itself forward to a destination which is not known. No one knows the purpose of Bergson's evolution. It has no purpose; that is all. The God of Bergson does not appear to be very different from the individuals on earth, who too struggle but know not for what, who too are not omniscient, not omnipotent, and are obstructed from all sides by external forces, who too are suffering through an inevitable strife throughout their life. A God who is constantly dying in the process of becoming is no God. And yet this seems to be Bergson's conception of God. Bergson does not notice that even the concept of change is impossible without an unchanging Reality underlying all change. Who is it that knows that there is change? How does Bergson know that there is ceaseless change, if he himself is moving on, never existing at any moment but only passing away incessantly? How can there be movement alone without something that moves? Who is it that evolves? Certainly, it cannot be evolution itself that evolves, nor is it change that undergoes change. Something ever-enduring, some pure being different from the process of change ought to be admitted in order that we may accept the validity of change and be aware of its existence. Consciousness cannot change or evolve; for it is consciousness that knows the fact of change and evolution. Consciousness is not created, but only unveiled; it is eternal being, not becoming. Becoming is the outer crust and the relative object of being. We cannot say that there is an evolution of consciousness *as such*, for this contradicts the

glaring fact that there cannot be a consciousness of evolution without a consciousness that does not evolve. What evolves is mind, not consciousness which is above and behind the mind. God does not create himself, for he is eternal existence. The fields of experience that are open to consciousness in the future stages of evolution are comprehended in this eternal, unchanging experience of God-Being; else there could be no evolution. How can a forward or upward motion of ours be possible if there is nothing ahead of us or above us? All evolution is within God who is at once omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. It is not God that evolves, but the individual and the phenomenal Nature. The Reality behind the *élan vital* is God whose essence is consciousness. The *élan vital* itself cannot be God, for it never is, it ever becomes.

There is change and evolution on account of a longing inherent in all individuals to attain their perfection in God. God is the Absolute in relation to the universe. Evolution has an end, a final aim, an eternal purpose towards which everything moves systematically and not blindly or gropingly, and by which it is directed with omniscience. This aim is the Absolute. There is universal evolution because the Absolute is universal being. It has to be realised universally, infinitely, eternally in the consciousness of pure being. The Absolute impels all individuals to evolve, internally as well as externally, for it is inside as well as outside. This impulsion is an inward necessity and not an outward compulsion in the sense that even the outside is an inside in the Absolute, for it is infinite being. What we call

an outward universe is really an inward being in eternal consciousness.

Knowledge and consciousness are acquired in the future through evolution on account of the presence of omniscience and eternal wisdom in the deep recesses of our own being, which we are only unfolding in the process of evolution. Knowledge is not created or acquired in the future; it is an eternal presence in us, which merely gets realised in the course of time. The vital impetus of Bergson is only the *external* phenomenon of the process of the return of the individual to the Absolute. The inward meaning of it is the necessity of an immutable consciousness which transcends even the *élan vital*. The *élan vital* is only the biological impulse of growth and the psychological phenomenon of mind which Bergson confuses with Reality. It is true that there is evolution in body and mind, and in Nature as observed by the evolving individual; so far we have to pay credit to Bergson. But it contradicts all sense to say that Reality is moving, changing and evolving. Bergson's evolution is an *open* march of the life force without an end or a purpose, which shows signs of a wild running amuck, as it were, of the hungry consciousness which does not know what food it is in need of. Bergson is wrongly identifying the unchanging Reality with phenomenal life force and mind which are subject to change and evolution in time. It is this false view that makes him think that the aim of evolution is in every immediately succeeding stage, and not in any eternally fixed being. It is not true that even God cannot preordain the goal of evolution. There is a purpose which determines

the kinds of organisation which a living being is to put on in the different stages of its evolution. Else, why should a particular organisation follow from the present one? All urge, all movement, the *élan vital* itself, is a yearning to realise God who is absolute consciousness in essence. This is the final directing goal of evolution. Here evolution stops. Bergson needs to be corrected.

The errors, bungleings and apparent regressions observed in life do not prove that evolution is not directed by a final aim and that it is all new invention at every succeeding stage of evolution. The errors are the defects of the mind, potential or actual, which on account of a want of manifestation of a sufficient degree of intelligence suffers in life and learns by experience from within and without. It is not intelligence or consciousness that commits mistakes, but the psychological functions in the individual. They go wrong in their estimation of the true values of life. Discord and disharmony in Nature are the result of a partial observation of it by the individual. To know the harmonious workings of Nature, we have to partake of the universal being of Nature in our experience and not stand outside in space and time as disconnected witnesses. To know is to be, and not merely to look at and observe. The universe is a perfect harmony of forces. The ignorant evolving individuals cannot realise this fact as long as they remain individuals and do not see with the eye of spiritual intuition.

Bergson's intuition is not so deep as the intuition of the Vedanta. His 'sympathy' or entering the spirit of life seems to be an introspective intuition of the flow of the

psychological consciousness and not an identification of the highest consciousness with pure being. The intuition of the Vedanta is a faculty of omniscience which comprehends the Absolute. Bergson has no possibilities of omniscience, no omniscient being exists for him. Even the *élan vital* is not omniscient. Further, he makes a sharp distinction between intellect and intuition. If instinct become self-conscious and ennobled can be identified with intuition, intellect too can become intuition when it is divested of its space-time relations. Intellect reveals a wider Reality than instinct, though it is handicapped by attachment to mathematical and logical ways of thinking from which instinct is free. But it is to be noted that only those endowed with intelligence can endeavour to reach intuition; the instinctive animal cannot do so. Intellect is the transition from instinct to intuition, and so it cannot be rejected as totally useless in one's spiritual advancement. The defect of instinct is that it is blind; that of intellect is that it is discursive. The value of intuition is in its integral illumination of total being, quite different from and superior to the partial views provided by the intellect. Instinct and intellect are stages in the advance of consciousness towards intuition.

Matter and consciousness are not, as Bergson supposes, different from each other metaphysically. The difficulty is that Bergson's consciousness is the principle of the psychological functions, and naturally matter which is presented as the body of the cosmos should be independent of these functions. For no individual can create matter outside or identify his mind with it. Yet, Bergson speaks of

consciousness as a metaphysical principle, the essence of the *élan vital*, and sets it against matter which is an obstructing as well as a helping medium in the evolution of consciousness. Under these circumstances, it is unwarranted to identify this changing and moving life-impulse with Reality. It requires a profound observation and reflection to recognise that matter and consciousness are not really hostile elements, that they appear as the external object and the internal subject respectively when the latter is confined to individual psychological functioning, and that ultimately they form the two phases in which the Absolute manifests itself as the universe. The existence of matter cannot be known unless there is a relation between matter and consciousness. The admission of such a relation would be to accept a unitary being underlying the two. Matter to Bergson appears as an entity second to consciousness because he is unwillingly identifying Reality with subjective mind, though he thinks that it is true objectively also, merely because it is seen working in everyone outside. It has been already pointed out that metaphysical Reality is not what is merely subjectively felt, though it may be felt thus by all individuals. Reality has a non-relative existence transcending subjectivity. Bergson's consciousness evolves because it is the individual mind moving with the operations of matter in a world of space and time. Evolution is impossible without space-time relations, for evolution is causation, whether we conceive it as linear or organic. And space and time are phenomenal forms, they cannot be equated with Reality. Bergson unnecessarily

emphasises the importance of time and makes it non-spatial, calling it an eternal duration which he identifies with Reality. It is impossible to conceive of time without space, and time does not cease to be a relative phenomenon merely because another word, viz., duration, is substituted for it. Space and time constitute a single continuum, and there can be no such thing as duration without time. Bergson thinks that there can be absence in space and yet there can be movement in time. This is a dogmatic assertion which cannot bear the test of experience, reason or observation. There cannot be succession or duration without space. Time cannot become Reality, for it has no existence independent of spatial and causal relations. Nor can it be said that causal change itself is Reality, for all change implies a changeless being as its ground.

Our steps in evolution are not completely free movements. We seem to have freedom because we work with our personal egos. If Reality is the Absolute, freedom can be only in a gradual approximation to it of the consciousness with which we work. Free will is not opposed to determinism; it is the eternal universal law operating through a conscious individual ego that is called free will. We are determined as individuals working independently with our personalities, but free as participators in the scheme of a cosmic consciousness. Our freedom is in proportion to our nearness to the Absolute. We are not really free until our consciousness is installed in the Absolute.

## CHAPTER XVII: SAMUEL ALEXANDER

Samuel Alexander holds that Space-Time constitutes the primordial reality from which everything evolves and of which everything is formed. The universe is not at rest, it is changing and evolving within Space-Time. In this universe of motion and change, order and regularity are brought about by the different categories which characterise all things and which are universal and necessary. Motion is the most important of these categories and in it all others—existence, universality, relation, order, substance, causality, etc.—are implied. The categories of Alexander are not the laws of the knowing mind alone, but belong to the constitution of all things objectively. However, qualities can be observed in things which cannot be directly deduced from space, time and the categories and which appear at different levels of evolution. Every succeeding stage of evolution brings forward an entirely new property, not abolishing however the qualities of the preceding stages. From matter and motion all things, even minds, evolve in a unique way at different stages, though this uniqueness distinguishes them from the properties of matter and motion. The qualities of the lower level are retained but new ones which did not exist previously are added in the higher levels. This is the theory of emergent evolution.

For Alexander the lowest and primordial level is Space-Time with the categories which forms the origin of all things. These are the necessary conditions of all knowledge, and in a sense *a priori*. Then emerge from this root the primary qualities (size, shape etc. of things), the secondary qualities (colour, sound, etc.), life (in its lower forms), mind



(intellect) and Deity (Spirit) which appear successively with the qualities of the preceding stages but with entirely new ones in addition. Deity has not yet been evolved. We are still in the stage of mind. In one sense every succeeding stage is the Deity of the lower. When the Deity above the level of the mind emerges in the future there will be the prospect of the emergence of a still higher Deity. But we have no knowledge at present of the nature of levels higher than ours. Once a thing emerges we can say what conditions are necessary for its emergence, and that every time such conditions are provided such things will emerge. So, Alexander's theory is one of determinism regarding the present and past, and indeterminism regarding the future.

There is no Deity existing prior to evolution and causing evolution at its will. Deity is not ready yet, it is still in the process of making. The whole universe is now striving to evolve Deity. Deity is neither the ground nor the cause of the universe. The origin of all things, even of Deity, is Space-Time with the categories. It is clear then that, according to Alexander, Space-Time has no creator, it is self-existent and is the cause of all other things which emerge from it. The God of religion is the whole universe thirsting for the evolution of Deity. Religious feelings and experiences are the action on our minds and bodies of the universe pressing forward towards Deity. Deity is not responsible for anything in the universe, for it is not yet born. There seems to be an endless evolution in inexhaustible time, and Deity itself is a creature of time.

Alexander's system is seriously defective. Space-Time is not a self-existent continuum independent of all else but is

relative to the condition and the position of its observers and reduces itself on ultimate analysis to simpler elements. Much light has been thrown on the nature of space, time and the categories, of matter, force and gravitation, after the advent of great scientists like Einstein, Jeans, Eddington, and others. All things are reducible to an indeterminable energy, and this energy becomes a mode of Space-Time. Space-Time is not absolute but relative and gets lost, in the end, in symbols and mathematical formulae, for Space-Time as Alexander understands it is incomprehensible without matter and motion. It becomes an abstract assumption made to account for concrete reality. Its existence hinges on finite bodies and is inextricable from their existence. Eddington had the courage to declare that the universe is ultimately coextensive with an omnipresent consciousness and that its stuff is this consciousness. Such a consciousness is not an emergent product of Space-Time, but is what determines even the existence of the Space-Time form. Though Space-Time is the necessary condition of all relative knowledge, it cannot determine the nature of Reality or be itself Reality.

That absolutely new qualities emerge in the different stages of evolution cannot be accepted. Where were the qualities before they were evolved? Who brought them about or made their existence possible? Nothing can emerge from nothing. The effect should be potential in the cause; else the effect cannot be. If consciousness is a by-product of Space-Time, it ought to have been inherent in Space-Time, which, then, would assume a spiritual character, and all things would be configurations of the

universal consciousness. Matter, primary qualities, secondary qualities, mind and Deity become inseparable from consciousness. The *nisus* or the eternal urge of Alexander ought to be a spiritual drive or aspiration for the attainment of the consciousness of perfection. It cannot be an unconscious effort, for unconsciousness and perfection have nothing in common. The *nisus* is not the product of the universe, but its source, meaning and value.

If Deity is not yet evolved, religion does not exist. There cannot be a *nisus* for some nebulous probability whose nature and existence are yet undetermined. The spiritual experiences of the saints would then be unhealthy dreams and our hopes for eternal satisfaction would be a question of chance occurrence. Alexander wrongly attributes the process of the evolution of individual and phenomenal characters to the essential Reality. The natural limitations which mark out the province of the operations of human understanding in general are responsible for our ignorance of the basic Reality which is not a product of evolution. What is created in time is subject to change and destruction. If nothing eternal is ever possible, our secret aspirations are swept away in the movement of time and our deepest convictions get brushed aside in a groping towards something one knows not what. One cannot know that there is emergence of a thing if something does not relate that thing to what precedes it. The emergent products are not neat parcels packed in different boxes but form a continuity of unfoldment of a supreme creative spirit. There cannot be mere jumps without something that

jumps. The Absolute is not Space-Time but the eternal Consciousness.

Alexander's view that the God of religion is the whole universe with a *nisus* for Deity makes out that the universe is the body of Deity. But this Deity does not determine the universe; the universe determines it. If it is possible for the religious mind to have a sympathy with or a feeling for the whole, it must participate in universal existence and anticipate in its own being the existence of Deity. The Deity should be implied in the universal mind, and be a realisation of its potentiality. The Vedanta teaches that, to the individual, the universe appears as real and so it feels a meaning in evolution. But in fact the Supreme Being is logically prior to the individual, the universe and the fact of evolution. Alexander's view is an empirical observation of the individual's superficial experiences. Such a view is oblivious of the more profound truths which are hidden in these experiences and which alone can account for their consistency and significance. In cosmic creation there is a reversal of the order of individual experience. In the latter, reality begins with diversified sense-perceptions, while in the former it starts from unified consciousness. Reality need not be bound to what we know through sensations and ideas. The visible is rooted in an invisible essence which is the start as well as the finish of our efforts.

The future may be undetermined from the constricted point of view of the creatures that are being carried by the winds of perpetual change. But, if we can ascertain a standard of the behaviour of things by inference from observations of the past, why can it not be that such a

determined order exists in the future, too, though we are unaware of it at present? The order of emergences in the universe is ruled by the law of an eternal presence which shines at the heart of all things, and the whole process of evolution is a long history of the self-realisation of this Divinity at different levels of the manifestation of consciousness. In the drama of life are enacted the various phases of spirit which masquerades in beings as the unseen seer of all thoughts and actions.

## CHAPTER XVIII: ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

Alfred North Whitehead occupies a place in the history of Western philosophy which makes his importance comparable only with that of the great masters—Plato, Kant and Hegel, who gave to mankind monumental systems of thought. Whitehead conceives the universe as an organism, a process, to understand which our notions of things, entities, substances, and of place and time have to be completely overhauled and transformed. We are generally accustomed to think that material bodies are located at particular points of space and instants in time, and that no other body can occupy those points of space at that time. This idea of what Whitehead calls ‘simple location’, which falsely tries to explain things without reference to other regions of space and time, is bound up with the common belief that causation is the production of an effect by a cause which precedes it in time. Whitehead’s criticism is that a causal relation between two things is incompatible with their simple location, for two things which are separate from each other cannot bear a causally binding relation between themselves. Causation as it is ordinarily understood implies that a knowledge of the cause should give us the knowledge of all its effects. This is impossible if we persist in believing that things and events are separated from one another. If the simple location of events is a fact, even inference would give us no knowledge of the inferred events, for inference requires that the events from which we infer others should have an ‘inherent reference’ to the inferred events in order that they may give us knowledge of these latter; but such a reference is absent between events

that are really different from each other. Memory of the past, too, would not be possible if all events are utterly cut off from one another in space and time. Our experiences oblige us to give up the belief in the simple location of things and events. There do not exist disconnected bodies or events at different points of space or moments in time.

If, then, events are not separated from one another, how can we distinguish between a cause and its effect, between the events from which we infer and those which we infer? Whitehead's answer is: By admitting a process that lies between all things, a process in which things themselves become parts of the process, a continuous flow of events, which takes us to the conception of the universe as an organism, a system in which every part influences every other part, every event is pervaded and interpenetrated by every other event. It is impossible to find anywhere in the universe isolated objects existing by themselves statically in space and time.

The theory of organism provides a solution to the problem of the relation between mind and matter. We are wont to think that mind and matter are two distinct facts of experience influencing each other in some way. But how can any mutual interference be possible if they are separated from each other? The problem can be solved only if mind and matter interact by a relation of process. Nature flows into the mind and flows out transformed by it into the objects of perception. Here, neither of the two is more real than the other. The perceiver and the perceived form one continuous process. There are no subjects and objects differentiated from one another. The perceived universe is a

view of itself from the standpoint of its parts that are modified by the activity of its whole being. There is a continuity of process between mind and matter.

The relation of substance and its qualities, too, as it is generally understood, presents great difficulties. We cannot say how qualities inhere in a substance; we do not know whether they are different or identical. The usually accepted view is that substances are featureless things possessing only primary qualities, to which the secondary qualities are imparted by the knowing mind. Then there remains nothing in Nature except motion, which appears as light when it impinges on the retina and as sound when it strikes the eardrum. The world, says classical physics, consists of mere electrical charges, having no colour, no sound, no beauty, no good, no value, nothing that we call a world. The world is in our minds. What is real is electrical force, mathematical point-events, symbols and formulae. And what of aesthetic, ethical and religious values? Science has no such things as these. We also know how Locke's distinction of the primary qualities from the secondary ones led to the astonishing conclusions arrived at by Berkeley and Hume. Whitehead points out that classical science discovers a featureless universe because of the notion of simple location of things. It committed the mistake of abstracting things and events from their relation to others, and substances from the qualities which characterise them. The remedy is the acceptance of a universe of organic relations, where all facts, meanings and values are conserved without contradicting sense, reason and experience, and in which all spatial otherness and



temporal distinction is overcome in a system of universal mutual reference of things and events. Space, time and events are organically related to each other; nothing can ever exist as isolated from other existences.

Whitehead learns from Hegel that all things and events are *internally related* and that to abstract them from their environment or their context in the whole would be to misrepresent them totally and to conceive them as what they are not. Matter is a group of agitations of force which extends its body to the entire universe and constitutes its stuff. The configurations of this force are called bodies or events and their existence and nature determine everything. Things are without limits or boundaries, they really exist everywhere, at every time, in every way. We cannot pluck a leaf from the tree and know what it is to the tree, or cut a part of the human body and know how it works as its organ. The bifurcation of an event from other events, of substance from its attributes, of cause from its effect, of mind from body, of things from the rest of the universe is a death blow given to all right knowledge. Whitehead propounds a philosophy based on the scientific theory of relativity. The result is the novel concept of the organism.

Whitehead's universe as an organism is governed by the law of *internal relations*. All things are all other things in every condition, and the relations themselves are not independent of the things. Now, we have to give up the habit of using the words 'thing', 'entity', etc. while studying Whitehead, for he has pointed out that our ideas of thinghood are bound up with our notions of simple location involving what he calls the 'fallacy of misplaced

concreteness'. What we call a thing is for him a set of agitations of force, a group of activity or energy, a configuration of process or motion, and he calls such a bit of process an 'actual occasion'. We shall, however, for the sake of convenience, apply this term to things in general or objects of our experience. Sometimes, Whitehead calls these actual occasions 'drops of experience'. These names given to the material of the objects of common perception are to bring out that they are not isolated entities but currents of teleological process, continuous with all things in the universe. No part of the process can be abstracted from the others and studied correctly. Every actual occasion involves every other, and to know any one is to know the whole universe. Actual occasions are spatio-temporal aspects of process, a nexus of which we call an object. An object is nothing but a continuous process of actual occasions as we experience them in their externalised condition. There is no fixed object anywhere. An event is a series of actual occasions revealed in perception as demonstrated in a molecule for a few moments. Objects are more complex formulations of such events. The objectness of an object is in its capacity to be experienced in perception.

Every actual occasion is sensitive to the existence of others, and thus to the entire universe. All actual occasions take account of each other, and in some way, subtler than even sense-perception, 'perceive' each other. There is a kind of pervasive 'feeling' of every actual occasion for the others in the universe. Whitehead uses the word 'feeling' in quite a different sense from the one in which we are used to understand it, and makes it more fundamental than the

conscious level of the mind in waking life. This feeling is a natural sympathy which the actual occasions have for the whole, a general connectedness and unity of the universe which they reveal in themselves by the very fact of their constitution. This rudimentary feeling or experience is, to Whitehead, of the nature of unconscious 'prehension' or taking into relation of the other actual occasions, a grasping of the characteristics of every aspect of the universe. The prehensions may be positive absorbings or negative rejections of aspects. The actual occasions are thus related both in physical and mental life; the two are not features of distinct orders of being. The process is feeling and reality, and the energy of physics is but what we feel within ourselves as minds, a feeling in our own constitutions as actual occasions for the indivisible process which is the universe. Every actual occasion represents and feels a situation of the entire process, and its very existence is due to the contribution of the rest of the actual occasions; it is produced by the whole universe by way of integration of characters, which Whitehead calls the process of 'concrecence'. An actual occasion is called more precisely a 'prehensive occasion', for it has no existence independent of its prehensions.

Whitehead speaks of an 'ingressive' evolution of the actual occasions from possible forms of experience which are known as 'eternal objects'. The eternal objects 'ingress' into the formation of actual occasions. These eternal objects are not concrete existences but abstract possibilities of the evolution of the actual occasions. The universe of our experience is the result of the ingression of one of infinite

sorts of eternal objects which have not all been actualised in this particular realm of spatio-temporal events. The manner of the selection of particular kinds of eternal objects for ingression is similar to that in which certain actual occasions contribute to the birth of the other actual occasions in varying ways of relation, which are known as the 'relevances' of these actual occasions to others. The actual occasions determine themselves by physical prehension of other actual occasions and by conceptual prehension of eternal objects. The eternal objects, therefore, are not different from the actual occasions, though distinct in nature, and even when not actualised form part of the process of the universe and influence everything by way of negative prehension. The laws of Nature are the relatively stable expressions or modes of its behaviour in relation to actual occasions that appear at a given time. As the universe evolves in time, its laws must change with its modified relation to its evolved parts.

God, says Whitehead, is finally responsible for the selection of specific types of eternal objects for ingression into the actual occasions and for giving the universe a specific *actual* character different from the many other *possible* ones. God is the 'principle of limitation', for he limits the actual occasions to only a few of the infinite possibilities or patterns of process that may characterise numberless universes. God transcends the universe of process, for what determines the process cannot itself be involved in the process. We cannot conceive of any reason why God should have imposed on the actual occasions a particular kind of limitation and actualised this universe

rather than any other. Whitehead says that there is a directing influence immanent in an actual occasion, called by him the 'subjective aim' of the actual occasion, which makes it what it is. Whitehead is not clear about the ultimate nature of this subjective aim, though we may regard it as an expression of the impulse to advance in evolution. The Vedanta would identify this subjective aim with the aspiration of the universe to realise its perfection in the Absolute which is immanent in the actual occasions and the eternal objects. Whitehead, perhaps, would hold the same opinion, for God and the universe, according to him, are mutually immanent and interpenetrative, though God stands above the universe as the principle of its limitation. God is the universal aim of the activity of the actual occasions, in whom they envisage their highest possibilities. All the values of life are recognisable in God who is the non-temporal ideal determining the actualities of the temporal realm. God does not create the universe, but makes it possible by the process of limitation, and hence he is not responsible for the evils of relative life. Evil is the result of short-sighted activity centred in selfish purposes wrenched from the universal aim.

But Whitehead does not regard his God as identical with the Absolute. God is for him a 'non-temporal accident'. If God is one of the accidents, he cannot be the cause of the accidents which constitute the temporal universe. God has to be conceived in more satisfactory forms in order that he may determine the universe. If, by the accidental God, Whitehead means a cosmic principle akin to the Isvara of the Vedanta, who is accidental in the

sense that he is relative to the constitution of the particular universe of which he is the lord, God has to presuppose a Reality which ranges beyond accident and relativity. Whitehead's God becomes a 'consequent', an effect, related to the evolving process, and so cannot be saved unless he becomes a manifestation of the Absolute which is beyond creation. This crown of all philosophy appears to be missing in Whitehead's system, though we may suppose that he would have no objection to taking it as implied.

The criticism of the commonsense view of causation advanced by Whitehead agrees with that levelled by the Vedanta against the notion of the production of an effect from a cause separated from it. The effect cannot be different from its cause, for it is not independent of what constitutes its cause. It is not identical with its cause, for, then, we would have to abandon the concept of effect and abolish causation itself from the scheme of things. But Whitehead's process does not fully solve the problem of causation, though it overcomes the shortcomings of the classical theory of the production of certain static entities from other static entities which are antecedent to the former in time. We cannot conceive of a process without spatio-temporal relations; and if space and time are not absolute, process cannot be reality. Process is the nature of the universe as presented to the observation of actual occasions which are falsely abstracted from the rest of the universe. But without this abstraction there cannot be observation or objective perception of the process. And, if the abstraction or the isolation of actual occasions from the other aspects of the universe is false, the experience of the

universe as a process, too, becomes false, in which case the identification of process with reality is a falsification of reality. We never know process as what is not experienced, and the experience open to us is in terms of an abstraction of ourselves from the whole. Thus process turns out to be a relative appearance of a reality which is more fundamental. The Vedanta identifies this reality with the immutable consciousness immanent in all processes and yet transcending them. There is the procession of actual occasions because of a reality which does not move with the procession. Whitehead requires to relegate his process to phenomena, and to reconstruct his concept of reality. The process may be real to us, finite beings, but is not real in itself.

If matter and life are fundamentally one, as Whitehead holds, the whole universe gets animated with feeling and experience. We have then, it is implied, to abandon the notion of inert matter and endow the universe with a limitless life which has to be equated with its reality. This life cannot be a process, for we have seen that a process needs some other support for it to appear. Life cannot be mere vital force, for the latter is a process of organic existence. It cannot be mind, for it, again, is a process of ideas. We are forced to return to a universal being underlying even mind, whose essence is consciousness. Matter, life and mind are the different grades of the expression of the Absolute in the region of space-time. They are comprehended in its essential being where they step beyond their distinctness of structure and realise themselves in truth. The Absolute is being and knowing.

The world of physics is the body of the *Virat* as perceived by spatio-temporal subjects. Science cannot concern itself with the inner significance of aesthetic, ethical and religious values, because it is busy with what is observed through the senses, and not with the factors that condition all observation. The latter become the subjects for study in philosophy. Values are not in things, the things are shells that cover a living principle in them; and it is the things that engage the attention of science. Value is the effect which consciousness produces in us when it envisages objects. The universe by itself has no sympathy with values, for it works mechanically when viewed as sense-object. This happens because in sense-experience the object is abstracted from the consciousness which informs it. Matter appears to consist merely of electrical charges and form just a kink in the continuum of space-time, because the scientist in his observations disregards the existence and constitution of his own personality. Science studies abstractions, not wholes. No wonder, it discovers a corpse instead of a living beauty. To study a piece of mineral or the leg of a frog is not to participate in the miracle of life. The meaning of existence is disclosed in ourselves, not in what we merely see. God peeps out in tiny man, and that dust of a frail body houses a Spirit which encompasses the universe. The eternal in us refuses to be neglected in our activities, and demands a careful attention by which we can listen to the voice of the highest heaven. The clatterings of the senses are silenced by the music of the Divine. Science has to return to philosophy to put on life, and philosophy has to look within to gain its soul.



The unconscious prehensions of Whitehead are really the tentacles with which conscious life feels its own parts in its evolution towards Godhead. The various degrees in which consciousness reveals itself are the forms of the mutual reaction of the phenomenal subject and the object. Consciousness hides itself in matter, breathes in plants, dreams in animals and wakes up in man, though it does not become fully self-conscious even in man. This process of gradual manifestation is valid only in individual existence. In cosmic being it is all an instantaneous illumination of all grades of life. The exigencies of individual experience, however, find it indispensable to extend to the cosmic scheme the scale of the gradual rise of consciousness in different orders of being and to make the cosmos the body of God. But these are explanations of life and accounts of experience as cast in the mould of our own make-up. Reality has no degrees in itself; there are degrees only in our perception of it. Unconscious prehensions are the conscious reaches of the Absolute through the sleeping individualities of the actual occasions. Consciousness cannot rise from unconsciousness unless it is already present in the latter, though veiled. Prehensions when brought about by the sheer force of the necessity of the interdependence of aspects of existence may be unconscious, but they are not so essentially when the aspects become alive to their positions in relation to the universe.

Both for Whitehead and for the Vedanta, God is not the author of evil in creation. For Whitehead this is true because God is not the creator but the principle of

limitation, who provides the conditions necessary for the manifestation of the universe. It does not mean, however, that there exists, as Whitehead supposes, any primordial material stuff independently of God, or that God is an efficient cause differentiated from a material cause. God is the efficient, instrumental, material, formal and final cause—all in one. But God appears as consciousness and also a stuff of creation when He is viewed in an empirical abstraction. The Vedanta explains the nature of the present universe as determined by the nature of the latent potencies of the unliberated individuals lying in an unconscious state at the end of the previous cycle of creation. The universe is nothing but a field of experience for the individuals that constitute it. Without the potencies of these contents, the universe is nothing. The good and the evil of life are both expressions of these potencies actualised in experience. God, therefore, has nothing to do either with good or evil. He is not grieved at our sins, nor does he rejoice over our virtues. He does not create agency or action, nor does he bring about the fruits of action. But he appears to do all these when we, as finite beings, try to understand his ways. Whitehead does not find any reason for the particular type of limitation that God has introduced into the universal scheme. The Vedanta makes out that the form of this limitation depends on the dispositions of the latent principles to be manifested in the shape of the universe. God is the light whose mere presence rouses the potencies to activity and self-evolution.

## CHAPTER XIX: THE NEO-HEGELIANS

The main trend of the arguments put forward and the conclusions arrived at by a group of bold thinkers, who are usually known as the Neo-Hegelian idealists, and whose avowed purpose was to construct a powerful metaphysical system originating in the critical idealism of Kant and founded on the logical absolutism of Hegel, are perhaps the greatest approximations of Western thought to the all-comprehensive philosophy of the Vedanta. The arguments of these idealists cover very extensive fields and do not always follow the same method. They admit of differences among themselves regarding certain essential points and come not to identical views in regard to the nature of Reality, though they are all ultimately idealists of the Hegelian type in one way or the other. Some of these system-builders actually attempt to rise beyond Hegel by their originality and reorientation of the idealistic tradition. We shall however confine ourselves here to a discussion of the views of the more advanced among them, whose doctrines come nearest to the Vedanta. Their fundamental teachings lead more or less to the view that Reality is an all-embracing Absolute-Consciousness, that all objects of experience, including the subjective minds, are comprehended in this Consciousness, and that the Absolute which is the whole determines its parts by the law of *internal relations*.

The general position of the more prominent among the Neo-Hegelians is that mind and matter are correlative aspects of Reality and do not have independent existence. The Absolute, they hold, is a harmonious unity in which all

contradiction is reconciled, transmuted and absorbed. The subject and the object have a meaning only insofar as they are related to each other as aspects of this universal whole. The perception of objects by the subject is not really the movement of thought outside itself but the recognition of its own universal nature in regions which remained hitherto undiscovered, and thus perception constitutes a kind of self-expansion of the subject. Life's unrest is really a spiritual unrest, an indication of the need to realise what one is not now actually but is potentially, to aspire to experience the Absolute. Every finite entity tries to grow towards its self-completion in this highest being. This unrest explains all the activities and processes of the universe at all times. The yearning for the whole cannot cease in the parts, for their true self is the whole.

The finitude of beings is not their full explanation. Every finite object is inextricably related to that which causes its limitation. Finitude is not self-existent but is determined by the presence of other finite objects. Such finites are infinite in number. Any particular finite is determined in an infinite relevance to the rest of the universe and has the principle of its negation imbedded in itself. Thus a single experience includes within itself the infinite and the finite, the former by implication and the latter by feeling. The finite struggles to be rid of its finitude and is continuously engaged in the act of overcoming itself in the infinite. Nothing that is finite can be real, for it has a tendency to outgrow itself in a consciousness that surpasses all finite existences. The infinite consciousness is not merely a collection of finites, but an indivisible whole

which transcends the finites in every way and constitutes an organic completeness. The infinite is eternal, Reality, the Absolute. It is perfectly self-determined, nothing else can determine it.

Thomas Hill Green, a great pioneer in the movement of this interpretation of absolute idealism, argues that all relations, whether in sensation or perception, require to be synthesised in order to form contents of a single grasp of knowledge. This synthesis of the manifold of sensations and perceptions is impossible without a synthesising consciousness. Even the existence of the related terms cannot be accounted for without a non-relative consciousness that lies behind relations. This consciousness must be spiritual because it is supernatural, above the appearances of Nature. Consciousness cannot change, for, if it does, it would have to be known by another changeless consciousness persisting through change; else we would end in an infinite regress in our search for the very possibility of a knowledge of change. Consciousness is eternal, for its cessation is inconceivable. If we can think of its cessation, our consciousness ought to survive its cessation, and we would again land in a deathless consciousness. Consciousness should also be universal, for it relates the objects of the whole universe. It is not merely *my* sensations and perceptions that are synthesised but also the various objects present in the universe. The consciousness that relates objects outside is not my personal mind, for the objects are out there independent of me. Hence, there must be a universal consciousness in which all objects and subjects are held together.

The natural or human consciousness is a limited mode of the supernatural Absolute. Man, as a finite organism, appears to be bound to the flux of the natural consciousness which works with sensations and perceptions. Here it is that he is constrained by necessity and subjected to the laws of the universe and of God. But the essence of man is spiritual consciousness which is the same as the eternal Divine Being. Here man is free and is not determined by any law. His law is the law of absolute freedom. For Green, the goal of life is Self-realisation. It is the highest good of man. The Absolute is revealed here as the universe, and so one can see it everywhere with one's eyes. All activity becomes, thus, a divine worship, a practice of religion in daily life.

Western metaphysical idealism reaches its consummation in Francis Herbert Bradley. His *'Appearance and Reality'* is a masterpiece of logical precision and dialectical skill. Bradley attempts to comprehend the universe as a whole, and not in parts or fragments. He examines a relative experience with its distinctions of primary and secondary qualities, substance and attribute, qualities and relations, space and time, causation, individual self, etc., and finds that all its constituents are self-contradictory and thus rejects them as mere appearance. Relational categories end in a vicious circle. Terms and relations result in mere correlatives. There is no reality to be discovered in phenomena. The whole universe is phenomenal.

But appearances exist. They must have a basis. Rejection of appearances is at the same time an affirmation

of Reality. That the contradicted is appearance proves that the non-contradicted is the Reality. All judgment implies a standard of truth. Any attempt to doubt or deny Reality turns out to be an affirmation of it. Even appearances must find a place in Reality, for they somehow exist. But they must exist in Reality in such a way that they do not contradict themselves. The being of Reality consists in harmonious experience. This experience is not personal or subjective but the essence of the Absolute. We have in us inklings of this experience in an immediate, undivided blending of thought, volition and feeling. This experience is prior to all distinction and difference and is given in the form of a 'this', a consciousness of a wholeness in which it is not divided into the 'that' and the 'what', the subject and the predicate. Bradley's experience is not the Anubhava or Sakshatkara of the Vedanta, but a unity of the functions of the psychological apparatus in an aboriginal feeling below the clear-cut distinction of the knower and the known that appears later in the operations of the intellect.

The Absolute is the satisfaction of our whole being and every aspiration and value has to find its fulfilment in it. It is the joy at once of intellect, will and emotion. It has no one-sided aspects, but is always complete in itself. It has no external differentiations. External differentiations would require their terms to be related in a larger whole of undifferentiated experience, or else they would lead to an infinite regress of relations. The finite modes of the Absolute are all *internally related*, and the relations determine the terms related by being their essential aspects. Reality must be an independent, absolute Being realised in

consciousness. This Being is neither the unknown nor the unknowable. It is not known in thought which has the habit of dissecting experience into the subject and the object. To know the Absolute, thought has to commit suicide. But the Absolute is known in an immediate presentation, a feeling of the nature of direct apprehension. Bradley is no mystic in any sense; he confines his 'immediate experience' to a function in us, finite beings, which may be said to be, in a way, the raw material of the psychological phenomena that present to us in their empirical state a mass of diversities. But, Bradley is about to stumble on the ground of the Vedanta when he says that the relational categories and functionings of the intellect give us a self-contradicting vicious realm of appearances, and that, though we cannot, therefore, know the Absolute through the logic of the intellect, we are forced to accept its reality in a consciousness which is non-relative and a whole. Kant and Hegel, too, had in them this immediacy of presentation in consciousness, on account of which they unquestioningly posited a transcendental unity of apperception and a trans-empirical Absolute, respectively, though they were disinclined to accept any kind of intuitive feeling due to their rigorous adherence to the laws of the intellect. Bradley recognises a deeper experience in which appearances are transmuted and absorbed to form a consistent system.

There are, however, a few difficulties which prevent us from identifying Bradley's Absolute with the Brahman of the Vedanta. Bradley conceives of Reality as a harmonious system, a unity in diversity. He does not rise to the thought that a system is a harmony of relations and that the



consciousness that relates the terms of the relations cannot itself be a system of relations. Consciousness must be above relations, transcending the region of system which is valid only in the realm of space-time. Otherwise, the system of the Absolute would have to be built by another non-relational consciousness. Bradley says that the Absolute stands above its internal relations, which means that it is not merely a harmonised system but pure being; rather Beingness. Reality is not in need of appearances; and the idea of harmony and relation and system belongs to appearances.

When the related parts of the Absolute are included in its fullness, they are also transcended in it. Bradley retains in his Absolute some aspects of the Isvara of the Vedanta and makes it not fully identical with Brahman. For Bradley the Absolute is unknowable by us, finite beings, but he does not show us the way to overcome our finitude and know it in its infinitude. His 'immediate feeling' is not the experience or realisation of the Absolute; it is merely a hint at the possibility of such an experience. The Vedanta has a perfect practical discipline and method for realising it in one's pure Self. The Absolute is directly known through profound reflection and meditation.

Intellectual logic attaches too much importance to the categories of relative experience and wants all appearance to be taken to Reality. The defect of logic consists not so much in differentiating the 'what' from the 'that' as in assigning to the 'what' a value independent of the 'that'. Appearances are not, as Bradley supposes, *transmuted* in Reality, but Reality in the consciousness of itself is divested of the relational vestures in which it is presented to the

empirical mind. Appearance is not Reality, however much it may be transmuted. Appearance is the *objectified character* of Reality, and when this character is negated in the immediacy of experience, it is not appearance that becomes Reality, but it is Reality free from objectification that knows itself as such.

The Neo-Hegelians, even such great leaders like Green and Bradley, do not free themselves from the notion that there is, somehow, some worth in the realm of relative perception, which has to be imported to Reality. Green thinks that there is no consciousness without object, no Absolute without the universe. The latter becomes necessary for the former to be what it is. Bradley is willing to take appearance to Reality by a transmutation of values and a change in significance, and to be contented with a harmonious system of Reality. This is exactly what the Vedanta does while it fixes the position of the empirical individuals in Isvara. But this technique will not be feasible when we judge the state of the individuals in Brahman. Brahman does not admit of any phenomenal category in itself, even by way of transmutation; it accepts only itself and nothing else. The universe is necessary for Isvara; his universal consciousness requires a universal object. But Brahman exists in its own essence, it needs no objects in order to exist. Empirical consciousness cannot be without an object, and Isvara is the highest empirical envisaged by us. But Brahman is metempirical and its reality is in its consciousness alone, independent of relations. Green does not notice this distinction, and Bradley unwittingly mixes up with the Absolute characters which really belong to

appearance, though lifted up to a universal necessity. The necessity of thought need not be the constitution of Reality. A failure to take notice of appearance as only an abstract presentation of objectifiedness as distinguished from the Reality that underlies it is responsible for the attribution of empirical categories to 'That' which is, by its own right, in its supreme independence.

## **CHAPTER XX: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF WESTERN THOUGHT**

The inadequacy of the philosophic equipment of Western thinkers in comparison with the Vedanta system does not, however, mean that there is nothing good in them. Kant, Hegel and Whitehead are some of the greatest thinkers the world has produced and their monumental contributions to the fund of knowledge are indeed marvellous. They present different facets of the wisdom of the world and the part they play in chastening the human mind in its endeavour to know Truth is not only important but indispensable from the point of view of a student of clear thinking and logical approach to facts. These thinkers played a significant role in stimulating human understanding in the direction of its ultimate limitations and the realisation of its highest possibilities in its search for Reality. They tell us where we stand as embodied individuals and voice forth human dignity as also what is implied in its final reaches.

Kant's researches may be regarded as the foundation of modern critical philosophy and the turning point in the Western attitude to the nature of Truth. It was Kant who pointed out that we need not be overconfident of our faculties of knowledge and there are serious defects in their ways of working. He showed that we cannot see Reality with our eyes, for the senses are involved in the limitations of the space-time constitution. There is no such thing as sensing Reality as we see the things of the world. This is impossible, for our bodily structure is in space and time, which have the character of restricting the operations of

anything existing or moving within their sphere. We cannot also think Reality, for the mind works in terms of the categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality, which have many controlling devices that restrain the mind from going beyond their limits. The moment the mind begins to think, it finds itself hemmed in by these categories from all directions and what the mind thinks is thus, what the categories are. Like the frog in the well of the fable, the mind moves within the framework of the categories and thinks that Reality is confined to their structure. Mathematics and physics cannot give us Truth, because of the reason that they work on the hypothesis of the reality of space, time and the categories of thought. The conclusions of these sciences may be correct as far as the world of these structural limitations is concerned, and we may well follow their lead in our abidance with the laws of the environment in which we all live, for we can never discover that we are wrong as long as we are circumscribed by space, time and the categories which will not allow us to know what is outside them. Kant also bars us from having any insight into Reality with the aid of the reason in us, for the reason, he says, is again limited to the categories and cannot help forming a false conception of Reality in terms of the categories. There is, thus, no metaphysics of Reality in the sense of any right knowledge of it, for we are always within a phenomenal world, and our faculties of knowledge are also involved in it. Mathematics, physics and metaphysics are all good as laws of phenomena, but unhelpful in our knowledge of Reality.

Then, what can we know, in the end? Kant's answer is: Phenomena. We cannot know Reality, because we have no means which are outside phenomena. We are in phenomena and it is futile to imagine that with our intellectual equipment we can have even a glimpse of it. Kant's greatness comes out when he accepts that we would have known Reality if we had been endowed with what he calls an 'intellectual intuition', which, in his system, is knowledge independent of the categories of space, time and thought, but he does not feel that any human being can hope to possess such a faculty, for everyone is within phenomena.

This incisive analysis of Kant is wonderfully equipped to meet the self-complacent attitude which overestimates human powers and makes man live in a world of vanity and ignorance. Further, Kant's great work, *Critique of Pure Reason*, is a masterpiece of acute thinking, logical deduction and honesty of approach in the human world, and it forms a necessary field of training for anyone interested in subtle thinking and comprehensiveness of argument. Kant does not deny the existence of God, though he holds that we cannot know him through our senses, mind and reason, for he postulates the existence of God on the basis of the moral urge for perfection surging within us. The affirmation of God, freedom and immortality is a subsequent phase of his thought, on different grounds. His study of the nature of human duty in society and the development of his thought on aesthetic beauty are important enough to engage the attention of any serious student of philosophy.

Another stupendous thinker is Hegel. His breadth of vision is supernormal, his passion for completeness breathtaking and the depth of his thought delighting to the soul. The spirit with which he starts narrating the story of the dialectical process of the Reason takes us above earthly vexations. As a true philosopher of great insight, Hegel attempts to bring the universe within a single fold of perfection as a wholeness which cannot brook any interference from outside. The Absolute has no outside, for everything is inside it. Every category in the universe has an opposite, every thesis is counterposed by an antithesis, for all things in it are parts seeking to find themselves in the whole. The thesis and the antithesis get blended in a synthesis which is a higher phase of reality in which the lower contradiction is overcome and transcended. The Absolute is implicit in every stage of this development, even in the lowest, as its vital essence and meaning. It is immanent in the thesis, antithesis and synthesis, equally, though it is revealed in a greater degree in the synthesis. This synthesis has, again, an antithesis in front of it, for it also falls short of the Absolute, and it forms the thesis in the face of this second antithesis. There is, again, a second synthesis in which the lower opposition is reconciled and a higher degree of reality revealed. But this second synthesis, too, has an antithesis, and the contradiction has to be solved in a still higher synthesis. This process, called by Hegel, the dialectical movement of the Reason, continues until the highest synthesis of all things, the Absolute, is reached, as the Supreme Idea.

Hegel suggests, here, how everything in the universe is incomplete and insufficient, and yet is a phase of Reality. Everything is to be included, and nothing rejected, for all things are phases of the Absolute, in various stages of development in the process of Self-realisation in its experience. This is an immortal credit to the genius of Hegel, for, when carefully pursued, this suggestion can lead to the practice of universal love and sacrifice paving the way to perpetual peace among the nations. However, his deep understanding was not taken seriously by humanity, and today he is not even studied properly in many universities.

The dialectical process implies also the principle of 'internal relations'. Every stage and phase is connected with every other stage and phase in a way that everything is related to everything else in the universe, either implicitly in the lower categories or explicitly in the higher ones. The Absolute is implied in everyone of its lower degrees and explicit fully in itself as the ultimate reality. We have already noticed the purport of these internal relations in some detail. This doctrine of Hegel is another master-stroke in the contribution of the human mind to world-solidarity. It tends to the bringing about of a togetherness of all creation and the abolishing of animosity, hatred and war among human beings. But here, again, Hegel's point has been missed by all people, and he has always remained too much for man's grasping power and appreciation.

The Absolute of Hegel is the grand culmination of every process in the universe—whether physical, psychological or spiritual. The dialectical process is not confined merely to the mind or the thinking faculty, though it reaches its



perfection in the Absolute Idea. Hegel is careful to see that Reality does not end with mere Idea. The Idea which is the highest *synthesis* of all lower opposition is also a thesis in relation to Nature or the universe of facts. Nature in its lowest form of presentation constitutes the astronomical universe, the stellar and planetary systems, the gross place in which we live. The world of physics and chemistry is subtler and should be regarded as nearer to reality than the astronomical world. But life does not manifest itself even here and it begins its first revelation of itself in the biological world. While the laws of mathematics apply to the world of astronomy and of physics, the law of internal sympathy, of cohesion and mutual union reigns in the realm of chemistry. But in the stage of the biological life of beings, something more is made manifest, viz. the incipient stage of the revelation of Reason, which at this stage is called life. The higher stage is that of mind and here we find ourselves in the realm of psychology. Hegel takes us, now, from Nature to Spirit.

The Absolute Idea as the thesis and Nature as the antithesis are synthesised in the Absolute Spirit as the final synthesis. The Spirit manifests itself in the subjective, objective and absolute phases. The subjective spirit is the field of mental processes envisaged in psychology. Hegel presents an illuminating discourse on the structure and working of the human mind and discloses how it gradually unfolds itself in the process of development into higher phases of reality, and how there is meaning in every act of thought and significance in every situation in mental life. The study of the human mind is not complete unless it is

able to reconcile the contradiction that is seen between thought and practical life in the world. With this in view, Hegel expounds the nature of the objective spirit which manifests itself as the principles of ethics, social contract, politics, government and law. All these principles are ultimately regulated by the law of the Absolute which requires that its immanent presence in every stage of life is recognised in the light of the highest perfection of an all-comprehensive *internal relation* of the structure of the universe. Human conduct, political legislation and the art of government are all to be consistent with the truth that the Absolute is all things and everything in the universe is a partial revelation of it. If this profound teaching of Hegel had been implemented in the lives of the nations, the world would have, perhaps, realised its dream of finding a heaven on this very plane of apparent discord and strife.

The subjective and objective spirits are reconciled and transcended in the Absolute Spirit. Hegel points here to a deep secret that our psychological and social lives are aspects of a higher reality and cannot be rightly interpreted or understood except in the context of a universal truth which embraces them in a sublimation of isolated parts and a transfiguration of individual values. The Absolute realises itself as the Supreme Spirit and it can be visualised partially in art, religion and philosophic contemplation. Though Hegel is not familiar with the spiritual meditations of Yoga or Vedanta, and has not understood any of their implications, his thoughts almost touch this point of elevated reasoning. Beauty is the visualisation of the Absolute through the senses, in its partial manifestations;

and art is the way of seeing this perfection through the medium of sensory instruments. Religion envisages the Absolute as an 'other', a God to be adored and worshipped. But in philosophy which is the highest meditation of the human mind, the Absolute is realised in its truth, as it is, and here the need for the perception of beauty through sense and for the practice of religion as a worship of an external God is no more felt, for the Absolute is integral experience.

Hegel's information on the religion of India is distorted and defective, and his definition of philosophy as the last phase of the Spirit requires amendment. But, nevertheless, he was a great thinker, and makes suggestive remarks which can themselves act as correctives to his own system.

The philosophy of Whitehead combines aspects of the metaphysics of Hegel with the discoveries of the scientific 'Theory of Relativity'. He is the most difficult of Western philosophers, both in expression and thought, for the ways of his argument are a novelty of his own. Like Hegel, he expounds the interpenetration of all things, and teaches the relativity of the universe as the totality of mutually determining configurations of force. For Whitehead, there are no things, localised bodies or objects which are really cut off from one another. Every object of the world is a collocation of forces, a vortex of energy, a point of concentrated motion, which enters into other such centres of energy to cause an 'ingressive evolution' of themselves perpetually. His criticism of the belief in 'simple location' takes us to the larger circumstance of the universe and makes us citizens of creation as a whole. The barriers or

personality, society and nationality are crossed in the ocean of becoming which life is in reality. We begin to inherit the wealth of the cosmos as 'actual occasions' which bear relations to the farthest regions of existence. Here Whitehead shakes hands with Hegel and establishes on earth a kingdom of universal abundance and prosperity. What lies between things is not empty space but a living process which is everywhere the same. We can touch the things of the antipodes without moving a bit physically, for we are there already as the waters of the ocean are everywhere in it. Whitehead's concept of causation, his understanding of the notion of inference, and his new interpretation of the relation between mind and matter are a high watermark in the history of philosophy. His critical estimate of the views of modern science marks him out not only as a great scientist but also as a great philosopher. We have here to refer back to our appreciation of his analysis presented earlier.

Whitehead, by his theory of 'actual occasions' or 'drops of experience' takes us beyond ourselves to the boundaries of the vast universe. We are made to outgrow ourselves in experience and reach up to others living in the other parts of the process of becoming. His concept of 'eternal objects', a quaint phrase invented by him, is a memory of the Ideas of Plato and sounds like the Vedanta doctrine of subtle bodies (Linga-sarira) which inform the physical patterns as visible bodies. His pregnant expressions, like 'relevance' and 'prehension' convey a meaning suggestive of deep philosophic insight. Whitehead, without stating it openly, hints at the existence of the Absolute by his view that

matter and life are fundamentally one, and life is experience.

While Kant, Hegel and Whitehead may be regarded as the most mature thinkers of the West, the other leaders of thought cannot be set aside as entirely irrelevant. Schopenhauer highlights that seamy side of life which the aristocratic philosophy of Hegel ignores as pointless. The fact of suffering and sorrow has nowhere found such powerful expression and pleading as in Schopenhauer. While the system of Hegel reached the well-to-do in life, the voice of Schopenhauer was eagerly heard by the poorer people. If Hegel is the exponent of an all-round perfection, Schopenhauer is the advocate of all-round suffering and pain. Schopenhauer touched a vital issue in human life and became famous as the philosopher of pity. His monumental work, '*World as Will and Idea*' is no less appealing than either the Critique of Kant or the Logic of Hegel. They present different aspects of truth, which require patient hearing. The transiency of life, the universality of suffering and the need for getting rid of it are important teachings of idealist thinkers and spiritual mystics both in the East and the West.

Nietzsche's craving for power is not merely a megalomania but a light thrown on one aspect of human life. It is not necessary that everyone should be a philosopher, but it is necessary that every event of life should find an explanation in a satisfactory philosophy of life. The desire for food, sex and power expresses a basic instinct. Philosophy has not only to appreciate its true position but explain it with reference to the goal of life. The

ego of man searches for power and seeks to dominate over others. This is a phase in the development of our individualities. Our worth would lie in detecting its proper context and transmuting it in a more inclusive understanding. The pragmatism of James, again, is true to facts of empirical life and is a science of psychology. Life in the world demands a recognition of its values and does not want them always to be transcended. We have to call a spade a spade. James appeals to the practical sense of the human mind and would not tolerate any violation of its principles. Every prophet had to confine himself to the needs of his times, since speaking too much would not fulfil these needs. We have to take every teacher in the context of his place, time and circumstance and then study him with dispassion. To wrest him of these factors and judge him from the standpoint of our present-day developments would be doing injustice to him and disfiguring truth at a particular level. James came as a remedy for overstatements and armchair philosophies which did not take empirical life into consideration. He emphasised utility of values and encouraged practical enterprise as against mere theorising which does not help one in life.

Bergson, like Schopenhauer and James, is not only an adept in expression and a master of the literary art, but an able thinker of all times. His theory of biological evolution explains the facts of growth in the living organisms and makes out that all life is such evolution. It is difficult to present in a short compass his insight into this side of the truth of the universe, a fact which presses itself forward into our presence every moment of our lives. His great

contribution to the world of thought is the forceful emphasis that he laid on the need for intuition and the impossibility to grasp reality through the intellect. The defects of the rational process and the comprehensiveness of intuition do not find a greater protagonist in the West than Bergson. When philosophers through centuries relied on the powers of reason in knowing truth, Bergson turned the tables round and stressed the place of intuition as the only way to the knowledge of truth. The reasoning process tries to connect disjointed elements of thought and reality, while intuition takes reality as a whole. He feels that even instinct is nearer to fact than intellect, for instinct is free from the vanities and artificialities of the intellect. Bergson would, perhaps, say that instinct illumined fully becomes intuition. While the intellect argues out reality, instinct feels it, though imperfectly. Though the faculty of intuition is not adequately defined or understood by Bergson, he took a definite step in that direction, which proved to be a monumental phase in Western thought.

Bergson's analysis of morality and religion is of great value. He regards religion as a defensive reaction of nature against the selfishness of the intellect. The egoism and diffidence of the intellect are counteracted in religion. The fear of death entertained by the intellect is removed by religion which holds out the fact of immortality and future life. When the intellect feels powerless and depressed, religion enthuses it with the concept of the all-powerful God. The instinct of self-preservation gets ennobled and channelised rightly by the belief in the existence and work of God, as thereby life is redeemed from its characteristic

selfishness. The higher religion is that of the saint who identifies himself with Reality. The saint loves all humanity as this love is included in the love of Reality. Morality is of two kinds: self-directed and outwardly directed. While the morality of the common man is a result of social restraint and compulsions of various kinds from outside, the morality of the saint is inwardly directed by the consciousness of Reality. This latter is a spontaneous expression of conformity to the essential fact of life.

Condensation of thought is likely to take away much of the value of the original. The importance of the work, *Space, Time and Deity*, in which Alexander expresses his arguments cannot be fully brought out in a review. Though there is much in him which may not appeal to the religious mind, there is also, side by side, much that can only be the thought of a master-mind. The scientific value of his study of space-time is great. If Bergson is the philosopher of biology, Whitehead and Alexander are the philosophers of physics. The value of Alexander's contributions is not nullified by the defects of his system from the point of view of religion and spirituality. Like Schopenhauer and James, Bergson and Whitehead, Alexander presents a picture of reality, which is not false, though not complete. His points of view are deep with suggestiveness.

Green is a pioneer in the development of Hegelian thought in the direction of a sublime completeness. His dissection of the knowledge-process paved the way to the fulfilment of the system in Bradley. the study of the relations of the finite and the infinite elaborately worked out by Caird and Bosanquet is rich both in depth and



vastness. While in Green is evident a fine religious spirit coupled with philosophical enquiry, Bradley's thesis is sharp with metaphysical acumen. Bradley comes nearest to the Vedanta, and Western idealism finds its best expression in him. A student of the Vedanta in its higher form is bound to be benefited by a study of these stalwarts of the West, who will supply him with the equipment of subtlety of reasoning, an irresistible logic of argumentation, and a confidence in one's methods, which is so indispensable to any genuine seeker of Truth.

Though the Western philosophers do not add to the wisdom of the Vedanta, they help in fortifying it with a powerful weapon against onslaughts from ill-informed sources. The logic of the West would be a good companion to the knowledge of the East. We need not be too eager to cherish either a fanatical adherence to what is ours or a contempt for what is alien. Knowledge is not the property of any community, and it has no national barriers. It succeeds when it is honest enough to accept what is of worth and substance, wherever it be found. India has gained much in the art of political administration and social uplift by its contact with Western culture, which, again, is inclined to gather some superb treasure of universal interest in the ancient culture of India. The East and the West are seeking a common purpose, and it is not true that the 'twain shall never meet'. The sense of spiritual values has to rise in all humanity.

## CHAPTER XXI: PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

The aim of philosophy is right living. Genuine, real philosophy, worth its name, is expected to enable one to live the truest life possible—a life of wisdom, free from the imperfections by which ordinary unphilosophical life is characterised. Philosophy is neither an intellectual diversion nor an academic pedantry overlooking the facts of experience in the world; neither a feat of empty scholarship nor a mere hobby of the care-free mind; but the intelligent analysis of the immediate facts of life as a whole, an examination of the implications of experience, and a scientific theory evolved out from such wise meditations for the purpose of regulating the functions which are responsible for the various phenomena of the individual's consciousness. Philosophy is, therefore, the great art of the perfect life, a life where the common notion of it is transcended, and the Supreme Being, which is identical with existence itself, is realised.

In Swami Sivananda we find a powerful exponent of such a philosophy, the grand philosophy of the Vedanta, and we also find in him an ideal personage rooted in the experience of the Goal taught about by the Vedanta. His life and teachings are aglow with the beautiful synthesis of the different aspects which make up life in its integrity. The Vedanta of Sivananda is neither a dreamy, subjective, world-negating doctrine of illusion, nor a crude, sense-bound, world-affirming theory of societarism. His philosophy is the one of the divinity of the universe, the immortality of the soul of man, which is identical with the Absolute Self, the essential unity of everything in the

universe with this Reality. Towards this end, he steered the course of the lives of people, bearing in mind the various degrees of Reality in which human life is wound up from beginning to end.

The most unique and impelling feature in his teaching, which he always exemplified through his daily life, is that no part of life's experience is neglected or turned a deaf ear to by his philosophy. A philosophy which overlooks some aspect or aspects is subject to the charge of being partial and incomplete and therefore not worthy of being regarded as a science of life. Swami Sivananda exhorts the aspirants after the highest end of life not to fight shy of the objective realities which stare at the face of even the majestic idealist. Every degree of Reality has to be paid its due; else it would rebel against the proud aspirant who has trodden over it with his eyes turned upwards. Swami Sivananda is the meeting point of the Upanishad wisdom with the practical man of the workaday world. The Vedanta does not shut its eyes to the heart-rending conditions filling earthly life, nor does it pass uncircumspect about the body and the mind with their downward pulls towards empirical life, though the province of the Vedanta is supermundane. The Vedanta is supermundane, not because it looks down in any way on the dreary earth with a transcendental egoism, but because it transforms and then embraces its fallen brother, the mundane life, in its bosom of an all-inclusive knowledge and love. Only, it will not embrace the brother unless he is transfigured by the magical touch of Divine Life. The universe is included in Brahman, when it loses its limiting characters of being a universe.

Swami Sivananda, with the stupendous experience of one who has dived into the core of life, teaches that the one Brahman appears as the universe in all the planes or degrees of its manifestation, and, therefore, the Sadhaka has to pay his homage to the lower manifestation before he steps into the higher. Sound health, clear understanding, deep knowledge, powerful will and moral toughness, are, all parts of the process of the realisation of the ideal preached by the Vedanta. The importance of this picturesque life is well brought out when the Swami insists on an all-round discipline of the lower self. He has a song of “a little”, whereby he teaches that a simultaneous development of the diverse sides of human nature is imperative. His Vedanta is not in conflict with Yoga, Bhakti and Karma. All these are blended together in his philosophy, as elements constituting a whole, in the several states of its experience. “To adjust, adapt and accommodate”, “to see good in everything”, and to bring to effective use all the principles of Nature in the progress of the individual towards Self-realisation along the path of an integrated fusion of the human powers, are some of the main factors which go to build his philosophy of life. He was one of the most practical of persons that could ever be found, though he had his stand on the loftiest peak of absolutistic metaphysics. He was an idealist-realist, a philosopher-humanitarian, a strange mixture of contraries which seemed to find in him a loving mother who brings together her quarrelsome children. To love all, and to see God in all, to serve all, because God is all, to realise God as the identity of all in one fullness of perfection, are his main canons. His

Vedanta is the culmination of wisdom, an expression of the realisation of Brahman attained through philosophical analysis which is made possible by the absence of the distractions of the mind, consequent upon devout worship of Isvara. This devotion, again, is hard to attain without self-purification effected through the selfless performance of obligatory duties incumbent upon all persons without exception. He prescribes methods for overcoming and mastering the physical, vital, mental and intellectual planes of consciousness, in order to enable the aspirant to proceed with his Sadhana, without impediments, towards his great spiritual destination, the realisation of the Absolute.

Swami Sivananda accepts the value of the different schools of philosophy as stages leading to and representing partial aspects of the philosophy of the non-dual Absolute. His philosophy is, therefore, *realism*: The physical universe is independent of individual minds; it appears material when viewed by the individuals, but is ultimately a mode of the spiritual Reality. It is *idealism*: The universe is an expression of the Cosmic Mind and the values of life are expressions of the individual minds. It is *empiricism*: The individuals receive sensations from the physical universe outside, which is independent of their thinking; God is above man and appears as the universe. It is *rationalism*: The forms of individual knowledge are constituted of the nature of the individual mind, and even the whole universe is determined by the nature of the necessary and universal laws of the Cosmic Mind. It is *voluntarism*: The urges of the will dominate the individual nature and subject it to suffering; the cravings of the will in man restrict the

functions of his intellect and make him rationalise the wishes buried in the unconscious bottom of his psychological consciousness, though the will can be overcome by the higher reason and discrimination. It is *dualism*: There is, as far as human life in the world is concerned, a difference between the sensible and the intelligible, matter and mind, individual and God, the actual and the possible, appearance and Reality, and one has therefore to follow the laws of the Universal which is above phenomena. Only in Self-realisation is this distinction abolished. It is *realistic idealism*: Nothing that is existent can be essentially other than Pure Consciousness. All existents are subordinate to it. The universe is dependent on the Real. God is the dynamic cause of the universe. It is *pragmatism*: The true has also a practical value. The world of sense is a practical reality (Vyavaharika-satta), because it leads to successful action. The existence of Isvara or the Overlord of the universe has to be admitted, and this hypothesis is indispensable to account for life. It is *indeterminism*: Man's essential nature is spiritual consciousness which is free and is above all determinations in the universe. It is *determinism*: The relative individual is limited to mind and body which are subject to the operation of universal laws. It is *evolutionism*: All things are products of development and tend to unfold themselves through several forward and backward movements in their final ascent to the Absolute. It is *phenomenalism*: The sense-universe is a realm of changing appearances or phenomena of the Real, and human knowledge is limited to these phenomena. It is

*transcendentalism*: The Absolute is above the categories of the universe. It is *immanentism*: Isvara is the indwelling and animating principle of the universe. It is *agnosticism*: Reality is inaccessible to mere human thinking. It is *mysticism*: The Absolute is directly realised in spiritual intuition and being. It is *pantheism*: The stuff of the universe is not outside Isvara. It is *theism*: Isvara is the cause of the manifestation of the universe and rules it as its Lord. It is *Absolutism*: The Absolute is the only reality, and its essence is Consciousness. The universe and the individuals are its manifestations or appearances. It is *mechanistic*: Events follow the laws of space-time in the world of sense-perception and understanding. It is *teleological*: All motion and activity is directed by Isvara, the final cause, who determines the universe by the law of His being to which the universe with its contents is organically related.

The Vedanta of Swami Sivananda accepts all philosophical theories, but with reservations, as different sides of truth, and not the whole truth. His Vedanta is a synthesis of all philosophies as well as a transcendence of them in a philosophy of the non-dual Consciousness which sublimates all existences in its supreme essence. True religion is the practice of this philosophy, and Sivananda's religion is a religion of the universe, applicable to all human beings, relative to their positions in the scale of the development of their consciousness. Faith, reason and experience, theory and practice, art and religion, service, love and charity, purification, reflection, meditation and

realisation, go hand in hand in the philosophy and teachings of Swami Sivananda.

The Vedanta philosophy which the saint Sivananda propounds is a practical, living one, and not simply a 'theory' of the universe. It is not a theory, but the exposition of the nature of one's practical life. We find this kind of spiritual life brought to its ideal perfection in the life of Sri Krishna, and explained in the Bhagavadgita. Swami Sivananda is an example of this type, a type of exalted beings, to whom the Vedanta is a commentary on life, far from those who think that philosophy is divorced from life, that the Vedanta is unconnected with the concerns of existence in the world. The Vedanta of Swami Sivananda is the science which opens up for one the true meaning and value of human endeavour, the significance of embodied existence in the realm of the experience, and enables one to lead a worthy and glorious life here for the purpose of rising to the blissful Absolute, in which the universe is realised as identical with one's Self, to which nothing other than the Self does ever exist, and as the result of which realisation the sage becomes the saviour of all beings.



## NOTES

**On the Nature of Philosophy:** Philosophy is not a theory but a vision of life (*Darsana*). It is not merely 'love of wisdom' but signifies a real 'possession' of it. The philosophers are therefore not professors, academicians or doctrinaires, or even 'spectators', but true participants of life in its real meaning and relationship. To be, a philosopher, thus, implies more substance than what is often taken to be its value in life. A philosopher is not concerned with human beings alone: his concern is with all creation, universe in its completeness. His thought has to reflect the *total* import of existence in its togetherness.

A philosopher's task calls for a great strength of will and clarity of understanding, side by side with an exalted moral consciousness. The usual prerequisites for a student of philosophy have been stated to be (1) *Viveka* or discrimination of reality as distinguished from appearance; (2) *Vairagya* or disinterest in those appearances which are divested of reality; (3) *Sama* or tranquillity of mind, (4) *Dama* or self-restraint, meaning control over the clamours of sense; (5) *Uparati*, or freedom from the distractions characteristic of selfish activity; (6) *Titiksha* or power of fortitude in the midst of the vicissitudes of life, (7) *Sraddha* or faith and conviction in the meaningfulness of the pursuit of philosophy; (8) *Samadhana* or ability to concentrate the mind on the subject of study; and (9) *Mumukshutva* or a sincere longing to attain the practical realisation of the Absolute. Without the equipment of these necessary qualifications, a student under the scheme of philosophy will be a failure and cannot get at either its method or its

purpose. Though the discipline needed is arduous indeed and no one, ordinarily, can be expected to be full with it to perfection, it has to be accepted that it is an inviolable condition of the pursuit of philosophy, at least in an appreciable measure. Else, philosophy would only shed as much light to the student as the sun to the blind.

Philosophy has often been identified with a life of contemplation, without action. That this is a misrepresentation based on ignorance would become obvious from the nature of philosophic wisdom, as has been stated above. Though wisdom is a state of consciousness and implies concentration and meditation, it does so not in any exclusive sense, for philosophic wisdom is all-inclusive. It synthesises the different sides of the psychological nature, e.g., the knowing, willing, feeling and active. Any lopsided emphasis is contrary to the requirements of a wisdom of life. The teaching of the Bhagavadgita, a monumental embodiment of the gospel of the philosophic life, is a standing refutation of the notion that philosophical knowledge is tantamount to actionlessness. A philosopher, in his heightened understanding, has also the power of sublime feeling and action for a universal cause.

Philosophy is not also opposed to religion; on the other hand it is the lamp which illumines the corners of religion both within and without. Philosophy supplies the *raison d'être* of religious practices, even of ritual, image and symbol. If religion is the body, philosophy is the life in it. Philosophy ennobles religion, sublimates art and stabilises the sciences, such as sociology, ethics and politics. It was

the hope of Plato that the philosopher and the ruler be found in the same person, if the world is to have peace. Philosophy is also the remedy for the illnesses which psychoanalysis has been immaturely attempting to trace back to a supposed irrationality of behaviour. Philosophy discovers the rationality behind the so-called irrational urges.

In India, philosophy as *Darsana* has always been associated with practice or *Sadhana*. What goes by the name of Yoga is the implementation of philosophy in practical life, with reference to the psychological functions predominating in an individual. Philosophy has therefore relation to one's *being* more than to one's intellectual grasping of outer situations. The philosophic truth is neither the inner nor the outer merely, for it is the *whole*. The cosmic gets mirrored in the consciousness of the philosopher who lives it more than anything else.

Philosophy is different from any kind of extreme, whether in thinking or living. The *golden mean* is its rule, which excludes nothing, but includes everything by way of transformation to suit the constitution of the whole which is its aim. To arrive at this finale of knowledge, it considers the cases of perception, inference and intuition; observation, implication and the testimony of experience. It neither denies nor affirms peremptorily. Philosophy is, thus, necessary for every stage and kind of life to make it a joy. There is no satisfaction where there is no meaning. Philosophy is the discovery of the meaning behind life.

Philosophy is impartial judgment without prejudice, underestimation or overestimation. It recognises the values

accepted in the different fields of knowledge and iterated in the various viewpoints of observation and logic in order to construct an edifice of integral envisagement. From this it follows that philosophy does not take sides, has a place for every standpoint of thinking in its proper perspective, and its function is to so fit everything into its broad scheme that nothing is either ignored or made to strike a dissonant note in the harmony of its development. Its position is that of the chief judge in the government of the universe. It listens, understands, sifts, weighs and considers the status of any given circumstance not from the standpoint of the circumstance in its isolatedness but in its relation to the whole of existence. No one can, therefore, afford to turn away from the divine gift called 'philosophy'.